

MYTHOLOGIZING PERFORMANCE

RICHARD P. MARTIN



MYTHOLOGIZING PERFORMANCE

A VOLUME IN THE SERIES
MYTH AND POETICS II

GREGORY NAGY, EDITOR
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RICHARD P. MARTIN

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For Greg Nagy

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SERIES FOREWORD

Gregory Nagy

As editor of the renewed and expanded series Myth and Poetics II, my goal is to promote the publication of books that build on connections to be found between different ways of thinking and different forms of verbal art in pre-literate as well as literate societies. As in the original Myth and Poetics series, which started in 1989 with the publication of Richard P. Martin's *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the "Iliad,"* the word "myth" in the title of the new series corresponds to what I have just described as a way of thinking, while "poetics" covers any and all forms of preliterate and literature.

Although "myth" as understood, say, in the Homeric *Iliad* could convey the idea of a traditional way of thinking that led to a traditional way of expressing a thought, such an idea was not to last—not even in ancient Greek society, as we see, for example, when we consider the fact that the meaning of the word was already destabilized by the time of Plato. And such destabilization is exactly why I prefer to use the word "myth" in referring to various ways of shaping different modes of thought: it is to be expected that any tradition that conveys any thought will vary in different times and different places. And such variability of tradition is a point of prime interest for me in my quest as editor to seek out the widest variety of books about the widest possible variety of traditions.

Similarly in the case of "poetics," I think of this word in its widest sense, so as to include not only poetry but also songmaking on one side and prose on the other. As a series, Myth and Poetics II avoids presuppositions about traditional forms such as genres, and there is no insistence on any universalized understanding of verbal art in all its countless forms.

VOLUME FOREWORD

Gregory Nagy

As I write in the series foreword, the driving force that inspired my original project of editing such a series stems from an understanding of *myth* and *poetics* as formulated by Richard P. Martin in his book *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the “Iliad”* (1989), which was the first volume to appear in the original Myth and Poetics series. That book has been for me the inspiration not only for MP but also for the second phase of the same series, MP II—which I see as Myth and Poetics 2.0, as it were. And now comes Martin’s new book, *Mythologizing Performance*, which is just as foundational for the overall project of Myth and Poetics.

Although this book appears chronologically as the third, not the first, in the new series, it takes pride of place in tracing the intellectual genealogy of Myth and Poetics 2.0. That is why I felt the need to write a separate foreword to this particular volume, above and beyond the uniform foreword that I write for all the volumes in the series. The task of writing such a special text is difficult for me, since so much of my own thinking about myth and poetics is indebted to the discoveries and discovery procedures of Richard P. Martin. How can I write, in just one brief paragraph that I have set as my goal, an adequate statement of my indebtedness to Martin’s work?

What makes my task even more difficult is that I discovered, as I was reading the page proofs for *Mythologizing Performance*, that the author has actually dedicated his book to me, his editor. That does not seem right, I first thought to myself when I made my surprise discovery of his gracious dedication. But then, on second thought, it all made sense to me: you see, Richard P. Martin was once, long ago, my student. And, I now tell myself, teachers should ideally learn more from their students than the other way around—and such an ideal is, after all, exactly what I have experienced over so many years of intellectual collaboration with my dear colleague Richard.

So, without any further self-consciousness about the inherent difficulties of my task, I proceed with an attempt to capture, in one paragraph, the importance of this new book.

In *Mythologizing Performance*, what Richard P. Martin has given his readers is a dazzlingly concise and yet far-ranging overview of the earliest phases of ancient Greek verbal art. In the course of the seventeen essays contained in this riveting book, Martin delves into the fundamentals for understanding the poetry attributed to Homer and Hesiod, which he analyzes in terms of the traditions that went into the performing as well as the composing of ancient Greek myths in the context of their ritual settings. In addition, he deftly connects Homeric and Hesiodic poetry with the far less well-known poetic and prosaic traditions underlying the kinds of lore that the Greeks attributed mostly to the mystical figure of Orpheus. All along, Martin keeps in mind the *performativity* of ancient Greek verbal art, revealing brilliant new insights about ancient Greek performers known as *citharodes*, that is, singers who accompany themselves on the stringed instrument known as the *kithara*, and *rhapsodes*, that is, reciters of poetry that is musically unaccompanied. And the absolutized model for such performers, as Martin demonstrates most convincingly, is none other than Apollo himself, whose divinity comes to life in his charismatic role as god of mythologizing performance.

PREFACE

In editing and occasionally updating the chapters that follow, I have sought to retain the mindset of the originals, taking care not to import backwards what I learned later. If one might not always detect progress in the varied attempts, at least my grappling with evidence and trying gradually to widen the questions may be helpful to readers. If I had known thirty, twenty, or ten years ago what I know (or at least think I know) now, I would have written differently. In the same spirit, I have not attempted to update references to new translations or editions, assuming the interested reader will find the best of the most recent ones. I have, however, provided at the end of chapters, where appropriate, a longer footnote that refers to a few of the most important works subsequently written on the issue at hand. These notes are emphatically not a compendium of all the books or articles that have mentioned the given problems that I have treated but are simply my reckoning of the truly major advances.

I owe gratitude to all those over the years who invited me to speak, or attended the talks, at which many of these pieces were first tried out, in the US, Europe, and Argentina (Chapters 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15). Thanks go also to the patient volume editors for whom I produced Chapters 1, 4, 6, 10, 11, 16, and 17. To four persons in particular I owe more than can ever adequately be expressed: my smart, genial, generous children, Catherine and Thomas; my wife, Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi, whose aesthetic sensitivity is luminous and whose *homophrosunê* has kept me whole; and Gregory Nagy, Hellenist par excellence, friend of forty years, Doktorvater, and ever-inspiring exponent of the traditions handed down by his own teachers, Albert Lord and Roman Jakobson. To him this book is humbly dedicated.

MYTHOLOGIZING PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION

To sum up more than three decades of research on the hexameter poetic traditions of archaic Greece is not easy, especially because the problems on which I have worked, and the approaches I have tried, are too varied to treat as a unified whole. Some key texts provide continuity: I have gravitated over the years to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Works and Days*. But this volume of essays does not attempt to offer anything like a comprehensive reading of those endlessly fascinating poems, articulating, instead, my views on some interesting problems within them. As will become clear, I have often looked to the margins and the marginal (so-called “Orphic” tablets, pulp fiction), as well as to performance traditions beyond geographic and temporal borders for analogies that might spur further thinking (medieval Irish and modern Greek especially, as well as Egyptian, Indic, and African practices). Rather than providing an overall view, therefore, of early Greek verse-making, the following remarks should be taken as a blend of provocation, manifesto, and users’ guide; a defense of a particular brand of philology that draws on comparative work and the diachronic study of literary semantics; and a meditation on methods and values in the analysis of culture.

The title *Mythologizing Performance* requires some explanation and expansion. Its second term has, by now, become notoriously capacious. As the folklorist and linguistic anthropologist Richard Bauman points out, “The term ‘performance’ and its grammatical variants and compound forms cover a lot of ground, and the terrain is far from clearly marked.”¹ Bauman’s own work (an early influence on mine) is illustrative, ranging from poetics and intertextuality to analysis of folklore genres and study of the speech protocols of seventeenth-century Quakers. It will be convenient, therefore, to list the aspects of “performance” most relevant to the following essays by reference to Bauman’s seminal book, *Verbal Art as Performance*.² This is not to privilege a single scholar’s definition, of course, in an area where dozens

¹ Bauman 2011, 707. See also, on the general development of his ideas regarding verbal art in performance, Bauman 2002 and 2013.

² Bauman 1977, esp. pp. 9–11.

of writers have carried out meticulous work that clarifies the subject, but merely to provide parameters within which we might make further distinctions. Later in this introduction, I will turn to the particular strain of classical philology that has shaped my body of work thus far, in fruitful dialogue with anthropology, folkloristics, and linguistics.³

First, as Bauman's book title makes clear, at issue is a subset of broader possible "performances"—namely "verbal art." By using this phrase (rather than "oral literature" or "oral poetry"), Bauman simultaneously broadens the area of investigation to include stylized ways of speaking that allow for creative variation (greetings, jokes, games, prayers, etc.) alongside more conventionally acknowledged genres (lyric, epic, drama), but narrows the focus to products of language. The notion of verbal-artistic "performance" thus can be viewed as part of a continuum that merges with other, primarily non-verbal, routines and enacted relationships (for instance, ritual and kinship protocols)—phenomena that can decisively affect the conditions for verbal art. But the core of the analysis will remain linguistic communication.

Second, performance offers a distinctive sort of "frame" that puts the literal linguistic content of any communication into a new perspective. Building on the insights of the anthropologist Gregory Bateson and the sociologist Erving Goffman, Bauman analyzes the particular "frame" of verbal-art performance in terms of how it guides interpretation. Within this frame, the essential actors are a "performer" and an "audience"—although these may never be formally or overtly identified as such. The performer assumes responsibility for a "display of communicative competence," in Bauman's words, based on his or her ability to speak in "socially appropriate ways" while being accountable to the audience for the manner in which communication occurs.⁴ The audience, meanwhile, assumes the right to evaluate the communication in terms of the performer's ability and effectiveness. Audience members enjoy an enhanced experience based on the inherent qualities of the verbal expression, which in turn are inseparable from the performer's skill. (In a less abstract mode, that one can talk of a "lousy joke-teller," a "brilliant preacher," a "persuasive orator," or a "failed poet"—my examples, not Bauman's—highlights the mutually dependent factors of ambition, evaluation, and aesthetic norms.)

³ Nagy 1996a has been my essential guide in thinking about performance as it applies to ancient Greek verbal art.

⁴ Bauman 1977.

A third and essential point flows from the notion of “framing”: in Bauman’s formulation, “Performance becomes *constitutive* of the domain of verbal art as spoken communication” (11). This approach, in sum, solves the bind that can be presented by an “etic” notion of “verbal art,” in which some (perhaps arbitrary or unexamined) “universal” notions might wrongly be imposed on a culture’s productions.⁵ Rather than seeking to identify what is “art” by reference to (culturally specific) formal features (e.g., rhyme or meter as indicative of “poetry”), pinpointing performance by frame-analysis works through contextual cues: when individuals or groups are detected in a “performance” relationship (given the expectations and assumptions outlined above), the substance of their communication is, thereby, “verbal art.” The spoken communication involved in purchasing a bus ticket (usually) occurs outside any “performance” frame; a later narration, however, relating to one’s friends the sufferings and joys of the bus trip, operates within the frame.

Bauman’s delineation of the features of “performance” draws on detailed work in the ethnography of speaking, a field that developed in the mid-1960s and brought folklorists together with linguistic anthropologists.⁶ One of the most productive results of this encounter of specialties has been the recognition that materials of interest to folklorists—specific verbal genres varying from one tradition to another among cultures—bear a relationship to broader structures within the languages studied by anthropologists. Taxonomies of the types of speech-acts identified by name within a particular culture can be seen to map onto “genres of speaking.” These in turn match, or at least provide the basis for, creative, artistic “genres” central to entertainment and social life. In other words, the verbal arts in a given culture are part of a continuum with the units (lexical and cognitive) organizing a culture’s overall understanding of speech behavior.

For example, villagers of the southern central plateau of Madagascar divide their speech modes into, on one hand, *resaka*, a category of “ordinary talk” that covers gossip, requests, discussion, and consultations, among other speech-genres; and on the other, *kabary*, the modes of which include formal speeches at marriages and funerals, at ancestral bone-turnings and circumcisions, and expressions of gratitude or sympathy. In effect, use of *kabary* makes an occasion into a formal or ritual moment.⁷ The Western

⁵ For a concise discussion of “emic” and “etic,” see Dundes 1962.

⁶ For a representative sample, see Bauman and Sherzer 1989.

⁷ Keenan 1989, 126–27.

classically-derived category of “oratory” is only a rough equivalent for *kabary*; a similar approximation would be to call *resaka* “talk,” and *kabary* “making a speech.” The “marked” category (to use the distinction from Prague School linguistics) is clearly *kabary*, while *resaka* is “unmarked.” The techniques of stylization and ornamentation that enrich *kabary* include smaller “genres” such as proverbs and traditional sayings, the appropriate use of which can be judged by an audience during performances (events that sometimes involve two speakers in ritualized dialogues). In Bauman’s terms, we can imagine the *kabary* mode as dynamically working in two directions: if a speaker uses the familiar conventions of the mode, he prompts his hearers to assume the “frame” of performance is in play; if a certain performance “frame” (e.g., a wedding) is already in place, the formal speech-events within it will then be held up to the standard of previously audience-tested *kabary* performances.

My interpretation of the *Iliad*, published nearly thirty years ago, made use of a number of studies from the ethnography of speaking to identify a marked category within Homeric Greek, distinguished lexically by the noun *mûthos* and related verb forms, which stands in regular contrast with an “unmarked” category designated by the noun *epos*. That the Greek words in question give us, in the *diachronic* perspective, English “myth” and “epic” respectively, and that these seem to be overlapping categories, rather than complements or contrasts, can cause confusion (Chapter 1 in this volume, “Epic as Genre,” attempts to clarify the relationship). But the identification of a mode of speech (*mûthos*) marked (like *kabary*) by fullness of expression and frequent deployment of rhetorical devices gives us a basis *within* the poetry of Homer to pinpoint moments in which the frame of “performance” dominates. In other words, an ancient synchronic and culturally-acknowledged (“emic”) system, rather than a modern, imposed “etic” scheme offers contemporary readers of Homer a sort of amplifying device, a means of listening all the more attentively to the key, “marked” utterances in the epics.

A first interpretation, then, of the present book’s title might take the word “mythologizing” as adjectival—that is, “performance that acts like a *mûthos*.” Inasmuch as *muthoi* can be understood as performances, a complete inventory of the speech-acts designated *mûthos* in archaic poetry would in theory provide us with the parameters of “performance” in early Greek culture. While such a collection remains a desideratum, the essays in this book follow a different path, foregoing simple lexical investigations in favor of treating each poetic production as itself an instantiation of *mûthos*-style speech: that is to say, in Bauman’s terms, a performance.

Perhaps a few Classicists might still question the basis for my decision to approach the *Odyssey* or *Works and Days* as performances, given the absence of incontrovertible evidence that these poems, as we have them, represent transcripts of actual live performer-audience interactive events. To such sceptics, at least three sorts of response can be addressed. First, we can adopt an hermeneutic perspective, one that begins from the texts as we have them, spirals outward to fit textual evidence into hypothetical broader patterns, and returns (via the “hermeneutic circle”) to re-read the texts with the refined hypotheses in mind. Because it is undisputed that the Homeric and Hesiodic poems, and the *Homeric Hymns*, explicitly depict (and comment on) rhetorical, poetic, or musical actions (or combinations thereof), it makes sense to begin our interpretations with the assumption that these internalized depicted performances (whether or not tagged as *muthoi* in the texts) must bear *some* relationship to the world of discourse experienced by the actual composers and transmitters of the poetry containing them. (The less plausible interpretive option would be to suppose that the pictures of performance within each poem were intentionally unreal, deracinated, or alien to the listeners.)

This is not to say that the acts thus represented match precisely the actions of those making the representations. A well-known case in point concerns the various songs of Phemius and Demodocus in the *Odyssey*.⁸ No one can reasonably assert that the *Odyssey*, in terms of style, length, contents, audience, performer, and other aspects, exactly fits any of the songs that Demodocus the court performer produces for his eager listeners on Scheria. The *Odyssey*, as a whole, sung or recited, would take approximately 24 hours; the songs of Demodocus, as depicted, take at most a long evening. The *Odyssey* is built on a complex double-stranded plot-line focused on forty days in the life of its protagonist and his son; the songs of Demodocus focus on brief episodes from the Trojan War or the love-lives of the gods, lasting less than a day. Demodocus and Phemius, the two named singers whose performances we hear of in the poem, appear to be comfortably settled professionals, resident in royal houses, where their job is to entertain and celebrate the king, his guests, and his entourage. No rivals are in sight; yet, from the *Works and Days* we learn that poetic rivalry is actually a paradigmatic instance of “good competition” (*Works and Days* 24–26), while the *Odyssey* itself offers another glimpse of the lifestyle of singers

⁸ A good review of previous work is contained in Segal 1994.

when it includes *aoidoi* in a list of itinerant “public” craft-experts, called *dēmioergoi* (along with doctors, prophets, and joiners: *Odyssey* 17.383–85). It seems, therefore, that the representations of singers within the *Odyssey*, even in terms of archaic Greek practices, were stylized retrojections of an idealized situation, one that may or may not have existed several generations before the composition of the poem.⁹ After all, the *Odyssey* (like the *Iliad*) deals with an overtly distinct and earlier era, a heroic age in which conditions were different (usually, bigger and better). In this regard, the Hesiodic perspective—in explicitly acknowledging the demise of the heroic age (*Works and Days* 176–201)—gives a more realistic glimpse of the situation of actual poets and singers.

To recognize the effects of stylization in the Homeric representation of performance does not undercut the force of the many clear continuities between the concerns and techniques of the fictionalized “internal” performers and those real composers who were responsible for shaping the Homeric poems we now possess.¹⁰ The two levels of composition each draw on such techniques as signaling their topics by a preposed noun phrase and relative clause (cf. *Odyssey* 1.1 *Andra moi ennepe ... hos* and the description of the song of Phemius at *Odyssey* 1.326–27, *noston aeide ... hon*); or punctuating narration with direct mimetic speech (cf. *Odyssey* 8.306–20, in the song about Ares and Aphrodite).

On a broader basis, both the *Odyssey* as a whole and its internal narrators are devoted to the commemoration of heroic *kleos* (fame through poetry). And the poem’s hero is himself an itinerant performer (like rhapsodes of the classical period and like Homer as pictured in the *Lives* traditions).¹¹ His narratives can be compared to a poet’s. Alcinous, the king of the Phaeacians, declares as much half-way through Odysseus’ artful recounting of his under-world journey (*Odyssey* 11.363–69):¹²

ὦ Ὀδυσσεῦ, τὸ μὲν οὐ τί σ’ εἰσκομεν εἰσορόωντες,
ἦπεροπῆά τ’ ἔμεν καὶ ἐπὶ κλοπον, οἷά τε πολλοὺς

⁹ De Jong 2001, 191–92 stresses the idealization of the figure of the singer in the *Odyssey*, connecting this with the *Odyssey* poet’s desire for self-promotion and implicit rivalry with earlier exponents of heroic traditions. On competition as a performance driver, see below.

¹⁰ On the differences between representations of singers and the external realities of Homeric performance, using the notion of diachronic skewing, see Nagy 1990, 21–26; on further subtle differentiation of the *Odyssey* narrator from the poem’s characters, including singers, in terms of the handling of speech and narrative, see the excellent analysis in Beck 2012, 140–54.

¹¹ On the *Lives* see Nagy 2010, 29–47.

¹² The ironies of this scene and its relation to oral-poetic practices are discussed in Chapter 8 below.

βόσκει γαῖα μέλαινα πολυσπερέας ἀνθρώπους,
 ψεύδεά τ' ἀρτύνοντας ὅθεν κέ τις οὐδὲ ἴδοιτο·
 σοὶ δ' ἔπι μὲν μορφῇ ἐπέων, ἔνι δὲ φρένες ἐσθλαί.
 μῦθον δ' ὥς ὅτ' αἰοιδὸς ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας,
 πάντων τ' Ἀργείων σέο τ' αὐτοῦ κήδεα λυγρά.

Odysseus, in the first place we do not at all suppose, as we look at you, that you are the kind of dissembler and cheat which the dark earth breeds in such numbers among far-flung humankind, men that fashion lies out of what no man could ever see. But upon you is grace of words, and within you is a heart of wisdom, and your tale [*mûthon*] you have told with skill, as a minstrel [*aidos*] does, the grievous woes of all the Argives and of your own self. [trans. Murray and Dimock 1995]

The *mûthos* of Odysseus (or “performance” as I have been arguing), spoken so skillfully (*epistamenôs*) and in such detail (*katelexas*), resembles a singer’s in all but the feature of musical accompaniment (missing, in the hero’s rendition). Moreover, although the logical link is not stated in so many words, this *mûthos* as a species of powerful utterance is implicitly truthful, when contrasted with the lies (*pseudea*) that characterize the speech of the sorts of “dissembler and cheat” who apparently have made their way to Scheria before this. The juxtaposition of truth and falsehood in Alcinous’ evaluation of the story makes it clear that he treats the ongoing performance as an extension of the hero’s apparent character—a man with a good mind and shapely rhetoric to match (*morphê epeôn*). In other words, for the king at least, there is no artificial distinction of the type that later literary critics made between “poetic” and “prose” discourses—they are of a piece. Lastly, the observation about the *mûthos* of Odysseus being more reliable than the fictions of others—due to its status as an eyewitness account that is not based on “what no man could ever see”—must be compared with the language of the well-known Hesiodic initiation scene. At *Theogony* 22–28, the poetic narrator tells how he was first commissioned by the Muses to sing hymns in praise of them and the other divinities:

One time, they taught Hesiod beautiful song while he was pasturing lambs under holy Helicon. And this speech [*mûthon*] the goddesses spoke first of all to me, the Olympian Muses, the daughters of aegis-holding Zeus: “Field-dwelling shepherds, ignoble disgraces, mere bellies: we know how to say many false things [*pseudea*] similar to genuine ones, but we know, when we wish, how to proclaim true things [*alêthea gêrusasthai*].”

Thus, an overriding concern with the truth-content of performance is what characterizes both the relationship of the performer with his audience, as represented *internally* in Homeric epic, and the *external* frame for a performance that delivers the divinely-inspired words of the poet Hesiod (who is both the “author” and a character within his own composition, in the terms of the *Theogony*). Once more, the seamless continuity of attitude across generically distinct forms of representation deserves our attention.

Finally, taking the widest panoramic critical view, it has been shown in detail by Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi that the aesthetic vocabulary and narrative tropes describing the ways that musical and poetic performances are apprehended and appreciated within early Greek hexameter poetry are co-extensive with literary depictions of how listeners received Homeric verse and related instances of *mousikê* in the classical period.¹³ Whether it is the songs of Hermes, of the Sirens, or of the *Odyssey*’s court-poets, the overwhelming emotional responses elicited by these mythic, fictional performances (from tears to enchantment to catharsis, the sensation of fusing with song, and silence) have precise parallels in scenarios written by Plato, Xenophon, and Aristophanes regarding their contemporaries. Of course, the fifth- and fourth-century depictions are themselves to a certain extent stylized: we cannot claim that they capture “real life” responses in every detail. Nevertheless, such scenes make use of deep-rooted, shared cultural assumptions and practices. That they affirm resemblances and continuity between the performances contained in archaic fiction and actual performances of their own day gives us a strong justification for approaching our texts afresh, not as purely textual products but as the result of full-fledged, living oral and aural experiences.

Plato’s dialogue *Ion* offers a second category of response—we might call it semi-historical—to those who question the performance context of hexameter poetry. The single most extensive source of information about the performance of Homeric poetry in the classical period, the *Ion* gives an account of a dialogue between Socrates and a professional performer of Homeric verse, Ion of Ephesus—a “rhapsode” or “song stitcher” who travels the Greek world competing in performance contests (*agônes*). The evidence of the dialogue must be handled with care because Plato, obviously, is a hostile witness: his commitment to the superiority of Socratic discourse means that he must downgrade what he clearly views as the major competing form of education in classical Athens, the traditional teaching of poetry,

¹³ Peponi 2012.

especially Homeric.¹⁴ Thus, Socrates is shown to undercut the rhapsode's claim to knowledge based on his particular expertise, as the philosopher relegates both the poets and the interpreters of poetry to the category of "inspired" interpreters (*hermênês*)—who by definition are not in control of their own thinking (*ouk emphrones* 534a). This move is accomplished by eliding Homeric poetry with dithyramb, the form of Greek choral lyric in which Athenian tribes competed against one another at the festival of the Dionysia (cf. *Ion* 534a). While this merger cannot withstand careful critical comparison, since the genres possess completely different metrical, dictional, and musical features, it allows Socrates to paint the form of recited, non-choral epic with the vivid colors of melic poetry—moreover, a form of this sung-and-danced verse that was notorious, at the time of the dialogue, for its extravagant, often aerial imagery, its innovative rhythms and instrumental accompaniment, and the evocation of ecstatic enthusiasm on the part of the dithyrambic narrative voice.¹⁵ In short, in the *Ion* "Homer" has been hijacked and held captive to the philosopher's will.

It is clear that the rhapsode Ion, as presented by Plato, is in the habit of reciting established versions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, although no reference is made to a written *text* of either poem. Expressions like "as the poems have them" (535c) are ambiguous, leaving unspecified the form in which the poems exist.¹⁶ The passages quoted by Plato closely resemble (but are not always identical with) the epics as known from later ancient and medieval papyri and manuscripts. The very first passage cited contains a variation, when Ion, apparently recalling Homeric lines from the Funeral Games of Patroclus, uses the adjective "well-planed" to describe the body of the chariot (ἐϋξέστω ἐνὶ δίφρῳ: *Ion* 537a7). As it occurs in the "vulgate" text, however, and is printed in modern editions (*Iliad* 23.335), the phrase takes the form "in a well-woven chariot" (ἐϋπλέκτω ἐνὶ δίφρῳ), with a different and rarer adjective found only in this scene to describe a chariot-box.¹⁷ The

¹⁴ Cf. on Homer's usefulness in education the view expressed (but kept at arm's length) in Plato *Republic* 606e. For similar sentiments: Isocrates *Panegyricus* 159 and Aristophanes *Frogs* 1034–36 and passages analyzed in Ford 2002, 197–208. On the *Ion* and Plato's attempt to discredit traditions of rhapsodic competition, see especially Nagy 2009, 373–86.

¹⁵ LeVen 2014, 152–88; the style is nicely parodied in Aristophanes *Birds* 1387–90.

¹⁶ In my own experience during fieldwork in western Crete involving the heroic romance *Erotokritos*, skilled oral performers who had learned this (originally written) poem by heart from repeated hearings (rather than textual study) referred to it as "speaking" its lines (*to tragoudhi lei*, "the song says"). The neutral phrasing leaves ambiguous the original form of the composition.

¹⁷ Curiously, three of the total of four occurrences of either ἐϋπλέκτος (with -το-suffix) or the related (s-stem) adjective ἐϋπλεκής in Homer are confined to *Iliad* 23, where twice they modify

variation in adjective could result from faulty recall of a written text that Ion (or Plato) quotes from memory. It might also, however, reflect another possibility: that Ion re-creates the Homeric passage by combining his memory of a standardized version with supplementation, at some points, that draws on his internalized knowledge of the traditional diction consistently employed by Homeric (and Hesiodic) poetry. In the latter case, it is relevant that the epithet found almost exclusively here in our sources for the *Iliad* 23 passage (ἐϋξέστω) does occur twenty-one times in Homeric poetry to describe crafted objects from bath-tubs to chairs, boards, and boxes.¹⁸ In other words, it was available within the poetic *Kunstsprache*, and its identical metrical shape and similar phonic shape facilitated the variation.¹⁹ The larger point remains: there is no explicit evidence that Ion ever acquired his knowledge of Homer from written texts at all. He might as easily have learned by heart (from earlier rhapsodes) a fairly organized sequence of scenes, character speeches, and treatments, and then have *varied* these from one performance to the next, especially under the pressure of competition against other rhapsodes from various city-states.²⁰

How “creative” a fifth-century rhapsode like Ion might have been is still a matter for debate. Of course, the answer depends on our definition of creativity when it occurs within a long tradition, such as that of Homeric poetry. Some scholars have sought to establish a firm divide between the “creative” early poet, “Homer,” and slavishly imitative later reciters.²¹ Others

“chariot,” (lines 335 and 436) and once “ropes” (line 115); at *Iliad* 2.449, the adjective describes the woven “tassels” of Athena’s aegis.

¹⁸ One manuscript of the *Iliad* (D = Laurent. 32.15, dated to eleventh century) has ἐϋξέστω, but this could represent a Byzantine correction made on the basis of the Plato text. The adjective ἐϋξέστος occurs a total of twenty-one times in Homer; all but three instances occupy the same metrical slot as in Plato’s version of the line at *Iliad* 23.335. Only once does it describe a chariot-box (*Iliad* 16.402), in the exact phrase that Ion uses for his version of the line from *Iliad* 23.

¹⁹ On similar alternatives as symptoms of the multiformity to be expected in an oral tradition, see Nagy 2004, 25–39.

²⁰ West 2011 suggests both that the rhapsodes owned texts (on the evidence of Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.2.10) and that they knew them by heart (Xenophon *Symposium* 3.6), observing that recitation from memory “will have been a prime source of the textual variation characteristic of pre-Aristarchean copies.” He fails to note that the variation was more likely generated by the rhapsodes’ immersion in the traditional system of diction than by simple slips of memory. On the role of competition in performance of hexameters, see Collins 2001b.

²¹ The most persistent version of this view was first expressed by Kirk 1962, 302–24. As his overall discussion reveals, the urge to draw a contrast between “creative” or “true” oral composers and reproductive rhapsodes is wrapped up with views on the dating of Homer, the quality of Homeric language (as opposed to allegedly “later” hexameters), the historicity of the Trojan War, and the date of the introduction of the alphabet. The *aoidos*/rhapsode contrast has most often been used to support

prefer to place Ion on a spectrum of performers that gradually ranges from those whose every poetic production is a newly created “composition-in-performance,” to those whose creativity comprises more localized variation on the level of phrase, line, or passage.²² Although the lack of evidence makes it unlikely that the question will ever see resolution, three points should be made to put it in perspective. First, the few references we have to rhapsodic activity of earlier periods than that depicted in the *Ion*, in particular concerning the sixth century BCE, present us with performers engaged in producing new songs. A hexameter fragment attributed to Hesiod (fr. 357 MW) recalls a time when that poet and Homer together as “singers” (*aoidoi*) made poetry with music (μέλπομεν) in honor of Apollo on his sacred island, Delos, “having stitched together song in new hymns” (ἐν νεαροῖς ὕμνοις ῥάψαντες αἰοιδίην). Not only do these lines portray a collaborative enterprise, which looks like a mythologized retrojection of the collaborative turn-taking in performance that characterized the rhapsodic competition at the Athenian Panathenaea; they also highlight the novelty of the production—a detail that we can compare with the words of Telemachus, concerning the Ithacan singer Phemius, that the newest song (νεωτάτη) is what audiences always celebrate (*Odyssey* 1.351–52).²³ In other words, the joint work of Homer and Hesiod is in this fragment imagined not simply as the recitation of an acknowledged older text, but as a new creation—even if it can still be conceived as the intertwining of two previously performed pieces. The verb *rhapto*, from which the agent noun *rhapsoidos* (“song stitcher”) is derived, easily allows for the latter possibility: a piecing together of segments. At a more fine-grained level, it could also refer to the practice of piecing together formulaic elements (phrases, lines, and scenes).²⁴

The same extensive scholium to Pindar that preserves the pseudo-Hesiodic fragment (scholia to *Nemean* 2.1, iii.31 Drachmann) offers further precious detail about a sixth-century rhapsode named Cynaethus, apparently

arguments in favor of a supposed one-time, early fixation of the Homeric text. On the weaknesses of those positions, see Nagy 1996b, 19–27, 93–112.

²² For the latter (to me, much more plausible) viewpoint, see now the masterful rebuttal in González 2013, 276–83 and 331–44 of those (like Pelliccia, as cited by him) who still hold to the notion of a dichotomy. For an attested rhapsodic variation (the only one mentioned in the scholia to the *Iliad*), see Σ *Iliad* 21.26b “κάμει χεῖρας ἐναίρων”: Ἐρμόδωρος ὁ ῥαψῳδὸς χεῖρας ἐναίρων ἤκουε “χειροκοπῶν,” κατεχρήσατο δέ. As Cassio (2002, 124) points out, this variant from the rhapsode Hermodorus (“got tired cutting hands” instead of “tired out his hands”) sounds ludicrous.

²³ On the idea of joint production, see Chapter 7. On collaborative sequenced performance in the Athenian contest, see Nagy 1996a, 70–77.

²⁴ The latter explanation is preferred by Kirk 1962, 312.

one of the guild of performers known as the Homeridae (“member of Homer’s kin group”). The interpretive trigger for the historical remarks of the scholiast is Pindar’s etymologizing reference in *Nemean* 2.1–2 to the Homeridae as “singers of stitched verses” (ῥαπτῶν ἐπέων ... ᾠοῖδοί) who customarily start their poems with a *proemium* to Zeus (as Pindar is in the act of doing in the poem, and the victor whom he praises has done by winning at a festival of Zeus).²⁵ We might note, as an aside, that Pindar, as composer of choral song-and-dance pieces, in this epinician ode (circa 485 BCE) makes the same move that Plato’s Socrates will make a century later in the *Ion* (circa 380 BCE): an intentional elision of epic hexameter verse with the poetics of melic poetry. That Pindar may consider himself, like the later philosopher, to be engaged in rivalry with Homeric poetry, can be argued from a number of other passages, but only here does he seem to use the strategy of co-opting the competing genre’s poetics.²⁶ Curiously, this melding of types (rhapsodic, epinician, hymnic) by means of their shared proemial trope echoes on a generic level what was reportedly done within hexameter verse by the rhapsode Cynaethus and his circle “who they say made many of the verses and grafted them into the poetry of Homer” (οὓς φασι πολλὰ τῶν ἐπῶν ποιήσαντας ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τὴν Ὀμήρου ποίησιν). By bringing together some circumstantial evidence with the further information in the scholium (derived in part from the third-century BCE historian Hippostratus) according to which 1) Cynaethus was the first person to perform Homeric poetry as a rhapsode in Sicily, in 504 BCE; and 2) Cynaethus composed the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, one can venture that this man worked creatively with traditions at a level well beyond minor variations.²⁷ If it indeed was he (or his circle) who constructed the *Hymn to Apollo* as we have it—dated, on independent historical grounds, to the late sixth century BCE—his art extended to the yoking of distinctive “Homeric” and “Hesiodic” styles embodied in the two parts of the *Hymn*. This created a structure that replicates the dynamic collaboration we hear of in the pseudo-Hesiod fragment cited above, in which Hesiod and Homer “stitch” a song in tandem.²⁸

²⁵ On these lines as imitating the style of a “Hymn to Zeus,” see Nagy 2009, 226–32.

²⁶ This should be considered in the context of the complex generic inter-relationships between the independent traditions represented by Pindaric and Homeric poetry, as explicated in the book-length analysis in Nagy 1990.

²⁷ As González (2013, 494) puts it, “... in all likelihood both he and those in his circle followed the centuries-old practice of recomposition in performance ...”

²⁸ Further on Cynaethus, see Nagy 1990, 73–75 and González 2013, 492–94. On the range of opinions concerning dating of the *Hymn*, see Richardson 2010, 13–16.

To return to Plato's *Ion*. Even if this late sixth-century rhapsode is no Cynaethus and, in the strictest interpretation, recites a memorized, pre-established text verbatim without addition or ornamentation, one cannot deny that Plato still portrays his practice as far more than a "reading." It is instead an emotion-packed, dramatic, visual experience. The poetry is "chanted" (ᾄδετε τὰ ποιήματα 532d8; cf. 535b), even while lacking musical accompaniment; the auditors are also spectators (*theômenous*, 535b; cf. *theatai* 535d) whom the performer Ion can bring to experience *ekplêxis* (the state of being awe-struck: 535b1–3). Most striking, Ion himself presents the epic scenes that he is reciting with all the skill of an actor, transmitting intense emotion and causing his audience to react accordingly (535c–e). He accepts Socrates' assimilation of his professional artistry to that of the *hupokritês* (536a1; cf. 532d7).²⁹ In sum, Ion's production of the poetry, although it may not have the spontaneity of "composition-in-performance," is nevertheless equally as attuned to, aware of, and interactive with an audience as must have been the supposedly "creative" stage of the medium Ion has inherited. It is, by Bauman's terms, a performance, whether or not we view it as somehow "original."

As if to underline this kinship among the evolutionary stages of the rhapsodic medium, Plato has Socrates refer to Phemius, the Ithacan singer (*aoidos*) within the *Odyssey* as a *rhapsoidos* (533c1).³⁰ And then there is the elaborate conceit of the magnetized rings, through which Socrates seeks to make Ion understand why he can be so enthusiastically and exclusively dedicated to Homer, while Hesiod, Orpheus, and Musaeus leave him cold.³¹ This analogy makes the rhapsode the equivalent of the master-poet whose work he recites: both are "interpreters" (*hermênês*). The notion of interpretation can be taken in two senses that happen to coincide in the contemporary English word. It involves enacting the words (or music, or dramatic art) of another, as when the conductor Michael Tilson Thomas "interprets" Mahler or the cellist YoYo Ma "interprets" a Bach suite; and it also denotes providing a parallel exegetic discourse concerning the works (as when we "interpret" a poem by paraphrase and explication).³² Ion boasts to Socrates that he, in effect, does both superbly well: not only does he bring out all the

²⁹ On the key importance of this concept for our understanding of rhapsodic performance, see González 2013, 297–317 and 521–639.

³⁰ At *Laws* 658b, Homer is called a rhapsode: cf. West 2011.

³¹ On the image of the rings, see Nagy 2009, 374–78.

³² For the semantics of *hermêneuein* in the *Ion*, see González 2013, 299–302.

emotional impact of the dramatic highpoints in, for example, a speech by Achilles, Andromache, or Odysseus; he also presents “thoughts” about the material that he recites. Ion’s habit of providing such *dianoiai* seems to reflect a widespread practice, to judge by (generally ironic) references in Plato, Xenophon, and Isocrates to the rhapsodes’ extra-narrative discourses.³³

The word Ion chooses to describe his manner of giving exegesis or commentary (it is unclear exactly what his *dianoiai* comprise) brings us finally to some noteworthy points regarding the performative nature of this rhapsode’s art. To Socrates’ observation that a good rhapsode must thoroughly learn to be an interpreter of Homer’s own “thought” (*dianoia*), Ion responds proudly that he himself can speak many fine *dianoiai* about Homer, better than the most famous in the business, naming Metrodorus of Lampsacus, Stesimbrotus of Thasos, and Glaucon. Given the chance (an opportunity Socrates politely declines), the rhapsode will perform. “And indeed,” Ion asserts, “it is worth hearing, Socrates, how well I have embellished Homer [ὥς εἰ κεκόσμηκα τὸν Ὅμηρον] so that I think I deserve to be crowned with a golden crown by the Homeridae” (530c–d). With the verb *kosmeō*, the rhapsode turns his art of commentary into an extension of the poetic art depicted within the *Odyssey* itself: as Jose González has shown in detail, the idea of *kosmos* (which covers both “ordering” and “adornment”) is a key concept *within* epic for describing correctly formed and sequenced narrations—the ideal of style to which the epics aspire.³⁴ In other words, recitation (“interpretation”) of the epics and “embellishment” through *dianoiai* about them are two aspects of one and the same process, in the rhapsode’s ideology.

Ion’s “embellishment” can itself be understood in two ways. Drawing on accounts of modern singers of heroic epic, some critics have proposed that the *kosmos* Ion brings to the poems refers not to the “thoughts” but to actual poetic expansion by means of his own ornamentation, in the form of new phrases and new lines.³⁵ Such a reading makes Ion resemble the twentieth-century *guslar* Avdo Međedović of Montenegro, famed for his ability to expand a composition using formulaic resources in the course of oral composition-in-performance, so that an epic song of a few thousand lines would

³³ See R. L. Hunter 2011 and Ford 2002, 72–73.

³⁴ González 2013, 194–200, 281. Centrally important is the *Odyssey*’s description of Demodocus’ song of the Wooden Horse as *kosmos* (*Odyssey* 8.492).

³⁵ Boyd 1994, 116–21; but see the skepticism of Hunter 2011, 36.

grow into more than 12,000 lines in his own rendition.³⁶ But it is not necessary to overstate the creative additions of Ion (which most likely would have been given more notice in the dialogue, and not tied to *dianoiai*) in order to understand what he does in more vivid terms of enactment. From accounts of Indic epic recitation, specifically of the *Rāmcaritmānas* of Tulsidas, we learn that the dual arts of reciting a text and providing commentary are treated equally (and judged critically by audiences) as necessary components of live performance events that attract thousands of listeners.³⁷ We do not know whether the judging criteria at the Panathenaic rhapsodic contests took into account the quality of Ion's *dianoiai*, of his histrionic performance, or of his faithfulness to a text (either as notional script or actual prompt-text). At any rate, bringing *kosmos* to Homer need not have involved something disposable or parasitic on the "text"; comparative study shows that such adornment forms an authentic and valuable part of an overall performance.

To sum up at this point: we have seen two bodies of evidence (song and *mûthos* performances as given in the poems; lore about rhapsodes) that impel us to treat archaic hexameter poems as performances. The analysis of this evidence (from hermeneutic and historical angles, respectively) raises the broadest question of all: what *difference* does it make to treat these as performances rather than texts? A third body of evidence—this time, built into the very medium of hexameter poetry—will help me to articulate an answer. It should be stressed at the outset that this third body represents a complementary and inherently *diachronic* set of facts to juxtapose with the *synchronic* evidence we have catalogued thus far.

The distinctive aspects of Homeric style—repeated phrases, recurrent scenes, a mix of dialects—had by the early decades of the twentieth century long been subjects of analysis.³⁸ The discovery of the metrically-sensitive and systematic nature of the Homeric "art-language" (*Kunstsprache*) had previously been noticed at the level of individual word-endings or pronoun usage: for example, the existence of five different forms of the genitive case for the word *ego* ("I") had been explained by earlier scholars as the reflex

³⁶ On Avdo, see Lord 1991, 57–71; on multiformity expressed in thematic expansion and contraction during composition-in-performance, see Lord [1960] 2000, 99–123. On ornamentation as an important aspect of Bosnian and Homeric oral poetics, see Elmer 2010.

³⁷ Lutgendorf 1991.

³⁸ A concise account of the preceding philological work of Witte, Düntzer, Ellendt, and others is available in Foley 1988, 6–19. The paragraphs that follow retain some material from my longer introduction to the translation of Hélène Monsacré's book *The Tears of Achilles* (Center for Hellenic Studies, 2018).

of the necessity imposed by the hexameter (each form having a different metrical shape). That the epics consisted almost entirely of formulas—lines and phrases re-used in whole or part, involving all kinds of words, not just proper nouns—had been proposed but not demonstrated in 1923 by Antoine Meillet (1866–1936) in *Les origines indo-européennes des mètres grecques*.

Shortly after the publication of Meillet's book, the young American scholar Milman Parry (1902–1935) initiated the systematic study of the techniques of oral-traditional heroic song while studying in Paris. A native of Oakland, California, Parry began his doctorate at the Sorbonne soon after obtaining his M.A. from Berkeley with a thesis on the diction of early Greek epic poetry, directed by George Calhoun. His doctoral work comprised a comprehensive analysis of the formulas in Homeric poetry, focused on recurrent combinations of proper nouns and attached epithets. Parry attempted to explain why, for instance, Achilles at certain moments is “swift-footed” and Odysseus “of much cunning,” but in other lines the same heroes are described, respectively, as “glorious” or “of many devices.” His major thesis, published in 1928 as *L'épithète traditionnelle dans l'Homère*, demonstrated for the first time that formulaic phrases provided, for each major character throughout the epics, one and (with very few exceptions) *only* one adjective to accompany any given proper noun, varying with the standard metrical segments of the epic hexameter line. Such an economical and extensive system, Parry concluded, could only have arisen over generations of poetic production, developed by epic poets who passed down their art within a continuing tradition. No one composer could, or would have reason to, devise such a system.

The diachronic perspective provided by the first phase of Parry's investigations of the Homeric texts made it possible to view the epics as products of long-term evolution, rather than the work of a single gifted poet. If it shifted the spotlight away from the lone genius composer, Parry's path-breaking demonstration of the traditional nature of the formula compensated at the same time by enabling interpreters to claim access to deeper structures of thought and cultural knowledge shared over generations. Poetic formulae persist because they encapsulate themes, images, and motifs of enduring importance to many audiences. In short, the epics are not the one-time artistic inventions of a single person whose relationship to any broader culture is impossible to determine: Homeric poetry *is* the broader culture. The all-important diachronic dimension, in the form of formulaic diction, exists as a testament to *multiple* performances, although it does not yield information about any *single* performance event.

Nor, at first, did the system discovered by Parry reveal the reasons for its own existence. Not until the second phase of his research, when he carried out fieldwork in the Bosnian-Muslim region of Novi Pazar in the early 1930s, did he realize, while making live recordings, that similar extensive and convenient dictional systems were employed by demonstrably illiterate performers of traditional South Slavic heroic poetry. By a powerful analogy, Parry suggested that Homeric poetry, too, must have been the product of oral composition-in-performance. Albert Lord (1912–1991), who had accompanied him on his second expedition, continued after the tragic early death of Parry in 1935 to work along similar lines in the Balkans, eventually publishing in 1960 the landmark presentation of their work, in his Harvard dissertation-book, *The Singer of Tales*. That volume made the first sustained case for the proposition that Homeric poetry was oral poetry, composed anew every time that a singer performed, through the creative use of formulas at the level of verse, as well as larger passages and episodes. Rather than memorize and recite a fully formed epic, the South Slavic singers of traditional heroic songs created something original each time they sang. Of course, these original compositions bore a family resemblance to all the previous performances, inasmuch as they used the same basic building blocks. But individual shapings could be detected even within this traditional process, in terms of expansion of scenes and re-deployment of conventional language.

Let us return to the question posed above: what the factor of performance means for early Greek hexameter poems. Given the work of Parry, Lord, and the scores of scholars who have built on their insights (analyzing more than a hundred poetic traditions), we can appreciate the impact of performance in terms of a combination of external pragmatic factors (how performers and audiences interact) and internal poetic factors. The latter, represented especially but not exclusively by the traditional formula, provide a way for audiences to understand a given passage or line through a sort of metonymic *pars pro toto* process. That is to say, a traditional formula summons up all the contexts and situations in which it has customarily been deployed in previous performances. It is redolent of generations of tale-telling and singing.³⁹ To call Odysseus *polumêtis* (“having much cunning intelligence”) evokes all the legendary episodes in which he has put his wits to use. To call Achilles “swift-footed” evokes his race around the walls of Troy pursuing Hector, and perhaps other events in his mythic biography. (Given the number of epics lost to us but known to have existed in archaic times, we

³⁹ J. M. Foley 1991 and 1999 provide illustrations of the phenomenon.

can only speculate.) Formulaic language is traditional, and therefore able to produce powerful resonances, even at the level of recurrent patterns made by prepositional phrases and conjunctions (as I show in Chapter 16). Formulae are the currency that enables the crucial performer-audience exchange. Variations and creative, even catachrestic, redeployments of formulae shape meaning for listeners of the poems.⁴⁰ The *diachronic* word-hoard represented by traditional diction and its related narrative techniques (especially similes and type-scenes) thus underwrites the *synchronic* moments in which poets engage with their public.

These internal effects will be noted many times in the chapters of this book. At this point, rather than list instances of such smaller-scale effects, I shall attempt to summarize the types of external performance factors shaping the poems about which I have written. But first it is worth circling back once more to the intellectual genealogy that led to these parallel explorations of performance that I have been tracing—both performance writ large and on the microscopic dictional level, the synchronically vivid and the diachronically durable. One finds surprising points of contact.

In Parry's study of Homeric diction and in the directions in which it took him one can detect (at one remove) the influence of Ferdinand de Saussure, the brilliant linguist whose lectures in Geneva were posthumously reconstructed from student notes and published in 1916. Saussure was the most influential teacher of Antoine Meillet, who had taken courses from him in Paris during the period 1885–89. From him, Meillet clearly learned the value of studying the living, synchronic state of a language. When Parry defended his Sorbonne thesis, it was Meillet, as chairman of the jury, who invited to the *soutenance* of May 31, 1928 Matija Murko (1861–1952), a linguistics professor at the University of Prague, then visiting Paris to deliver a series of lectures on his specialty, the folk poetry of Yugoslavia. It was at Meillet's urging that Parry later absorbed Murko's works and decided to carry out his own fieldwork, during periods of leave from his position in the Harvard Department of the Classics.

Two decades later, when Parry's co-worker Albert Lord defended his Harvard dissertation in 1949, the Slavist and linguist Roman Jakobson (1896–1982) was on the committee. Not only had Jakobson come to know Murko in Prague in the 1920s, he had made use of his early field recordings as he began his own career. Jakobson, like Meillet, also drew on the work of Saussure to

⁴⁰ For a full-scale demonstration of the enrichment enabled by traditional diction, within one *Iliad* book, see Kelly 2007.

develop key concepts in his studies in structural linguistics. His early work with Nikolai Trubetzkoy, a fellow member of the informal Linguistic Circle of Prague, used Saussurean concepts to lay the foundation for an approach to language as a system in which basic elements, like phonemes, possess meaning only through a systematic and contrastive relationship to other elements. During the Second World War, Jakobson taught at the New School in New York City. There, another émigré scholar, the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) attended his lectures on structural phonology, and with Jakobson's encouragement began work on what would become his landmark 1949 study *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*.

Dell Hymes, the linguistic anthropologist, first met Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss in the summer of 1952 during a conference at Indiana University. After hearing Jakobson at a subsequent conference there (in 1958) deliver his classic paper on "Linguistics and Poetics," Hymes re-oriented his own work toward the functions of language, eventually developing the field known as the ethnography of speaking.⁴¹ His colleague in this area, Richard Bauman, with whose remarks on performance I began this introduction, also credits Jakobson:

In the process of attempting to refine and specify more clearly my developing notion of performance in the writing of *Verbal Art*, I was strongly inspired by Prague School poetics in the work of Roman Jakobson and his colleagues in prewar Prague, especially Jan Mukarovský, and by Erving Goffman's frame analysis, to which I was introduced by Goffman's lectures and by conversations with him even before the publication of *Frame Analysis* in 1974. Prague School poetics, especially as developed in Mukarovský's and Jakobson's writings on the poetic function, and Jakobson's writings on the metalingual function, parallelism, and shifters, rests centrally on dimensions of linguistic reflexivity, the capacity of language to refer to itself, to treat itself as an object.⁴²

It emerges, then, that two intertwined strands are woven into the fabric of the twenty-first-century study of traditional poetry and performance: one anthropological, one linguistic, both leading back to Saussure (although with a number of further interactions along the way), one via Meillet, the other via Jakobson (who binds the two strands together). One cannot omit mention of a further twist: Parry himself, as John García has shown, was influenced as a student at Berkeley by the three courses he took from A. L. Kroeber

⁴¹ Hymes 1983.

⁴² Bauman 2002, 94.

(1876–1960), a linguistic anthropologist and leading scholar in American Indian studies.⁴³ The importance of recovering the cultural artifacts of non-literate peoples; of the key role of tradition in culture; and of the notion of “the genius of the people” as opposed to the cultural dominance of individual artists—clearly these themes are common to the work of Kroeber and Parry. The latter may well have inherited a passion for them from his teacher.

What stands out as we survey this intellectual heritage is the crucial role that anthropology plays in broadening our understanding of individual cultural productions. This is worth stressing, because for many classical scholars, both upon the first appearance of *The Singer of Tales* and in later decades, the work of Parry and Lord seemed to raise disturbing questions about authorship and the perceived superiority of certain cultural epochs. Did the discovery of a systematic set of conventions for producing epic diminish or abolish the genius of an individual poet Homer? And did the textualization of Homeric verse signal an irreversible total shift from “oral” to “literate” culture? The last decades have seen much needed nuancing of such questions, so that crude oppositions of “orality” and “literacy” are no longer taken as plausible explanatory devices in cultural studies, while the question of “authorship” has itself been historicized as part of a late-Romantic obsession that unhelpfully obscures the ways in which traditional verbal arts operate.⁴⁴ Yet one wonders how much more progress might have been made had Classicists readily appreciated and adopted broad-minded anthropological approaches to language, poetry, myth, and culture as early as 1960 (the year Lord’s book was published, and the year of Kroeber’s death). As it turned out, proponents of oral-traditional poetics within Classics often had to fight a rear-guard action against more reactionary views. Some scholars appeared to suspect that ethnographic work would subvert their vision of a Western tradition built (so it seemed) on the hegemony of Homer.⁴⁵

It is time to turn to specifics, in relation to the question of what literary interpretation gains from a performance perspective on hexameter poetry. Although the chapters that follow were never planned as part of an organized

⁴³ García 2001.

⁴⁴ On the second issue, see Martin 2017; on various anthropologically inflected approaches that have enriched Classics since the 1970s, see Martin 2008.

⁴⁵ On the reactionary stance taken to oral-traditional poetics, see especially Nagy 1996b, 6–11. Of the many dismissive comments that could be quoted, especially directed at Albert Lord, I content myself with one by Arieti (1992, 88) on my own 1989 book: “Martin affords to anthropological investigators of exotic tribes a reverence he does not share for his colleagues in Classics ...” The failure to place “exotic” in scare quotes is revealing.

exposition of the approach, in retrospect one can view them as structured around three major recurrent phenomena related to performance. Allow me to call these “awareness,” “competition,” and “impersonation.” At times, these are overtly thematized in the poems—Chapter 16, on the chariot race of *Iliad* 23, illustrates how that competition can be extended into a meta-poetic meditation (while not losing any of its amazing vigor and suspense). In most cases, however, the phenomena need to be understood as external framing attitudes: if we read, for instance, the performances of Odysseus in *Odyssey* 8 (Chapter 12) and *Odyssey* 11 (Chapter 8) as framed by a latent understanding that his words are meant to evoke rival poetic traditions, our appreciation for the artistry of the scenes in question increases: the poetry gets deeper, and becomes (even more) multidimensional. That, to me, is what a philologically honest literary criticism should accomplish. To turn to these three aspects, then:

Awareness

In its simplest form, we might describe awareness in performance as “phatic,” like those utterances or intonations whose purpose is to keep alive an interaction between speaker and addressee: “you know,” “see,” “right?” or, in Modern Greek, “katalaves?” and so on. In terms of the ethnographic approach to verbal art, a recent formulation puts it concisely: “the esthetics of performance are tightly bound up with the issue of reflexivity—the performer’s awareness of him- or herself as a participant in an interaction, his or her signaling of this awareness, and the reciprocal phenomena experienced by the audience.”⁴⁶ In early Greek hexameter compositions, remarkably few directly “phatic” signals survive, by which an audience is recognized, let alone addressed. (One moment might be the narrator’s request that the Muse in *Odyssey* 1.10 “tell also to us”.) But there exist other ways through which the poetry itself communicates its awareness of being a stylized medium and privileged means of exchange between the speaker (poet, singer, reciter) and audience. A “set toward the message” (in Jakobson’s terms)—that is, a focus on the “poetic” function of language—can also become (though Jakobson did not develop this connection) a “phatic” function, serving to communicate to an audience “we are sharing verbal art now.” It is a matter of subtle shifting. If the medium of hexameter verse and formulaic diction is the default for

⁴⁶ Berger and Del Negro 2002, 63.

communicating about the world of gods and heroes, or ethical instruction, then a shift in register *within* that medium (while basic hexameter style is maintained) can bring about a sharper awareness of the stylized, poetic nature of the exchange, resulting in the audience's heightened awareness of the possibilities for fictionalizing and impersonation with which the poetry constantly plays. In Chapters 2 and 3, I detect two essential shifts in performance key, of the sort that would be easily recognizable to oral audiences in living exchanges, but are much harder to hear in our silent reading of the texts. That similes are lexically, linguistically, and even metrically distinct, sounding much more like our surviving fragments of archaic Greek lyric, leads me in Chapter 2, after a survey of comparative non-Greek traditions, to suggest that they were performed in a different manner than the surrounding narrative—perhaps even sung as opposed to recited.⁴⁷

A similar intratextual discovery is at the core of Chapter 3: that the phrasing of speeches draws on a distinctly different set of formulaic resources than does narrative, at least in a subset of speeches in the *Odyssey*. Notably, this does not just occur in cases where one would normally expect changes of tense or ending (presents or futures in speeches, second-person addresses, etc.), but in what we might consider straightforward expressions often used in narrative—which, however, turn out to be restricted to speeches in Homer. As with similes, this minor key modulation can be paralleled through a survey of comparative folk traditions, especially in Central and Southeast Asia, in which character-speech is actually performed in a different manner (or even, different dialect). A third example of modulation within the default mode of hexameter is examined in Chapter 4. Nestor's autobiographical speech, often dismissed as rambling and misplaced, on closer examination can be seen as a relic form of an older way of narrating heroic experience (a fine example of characterization by style). To an audience immersed in the default style of Homeric verse, Nestor's self-mythologizing performance must sound different, as though composed in a minor key. Not only would an audience's awareness of its changed style make the speech stand out; the placement of the speech, as well, within the *Iliad's* narrative draws on a less diffuse awareness, the remembrance of the oddly disturbing night raid carried out in Book 10, in which Nestor played a controlling role. In sum, the stylistic and narratological shift evident in Nestor's autobiography intensifies and

⁴⁷ On similes as malleable components of living performances, even stylizing agonistic relations, see now Ready 2011.

complicates an emotional reaction to the dramatic ambush by Odysseus and Diomedes in the preceding episode.

While such key modulations function to re-focus the audience during a performance, drawing attention to the very medium in which they are absorbed, another technique draws on an audience's awareness of different "genres of speaking" in order to create or deepen the meaning of a poetic scene. I have tracked various examples of this effect in Chapters 6, 9, 12, and 14. Accustomed as we are to read poems—rather than hear or imagine them as living performances—it is easy to assimilate this technique to the realm of "intertextuality." But to do so risks being reductive and misleading. When in *Odyssey* Book 8 Odysseus, in a rebuke to a young Phaeacian mocker, uses tropes and formulae that we can find also in a passage of the *Theogony*, it cannot be presumed that an ancient audience is meant to hear an intertextual "quote" of that specific Hesiodic text (or vice versa, hears the *Theogony* somehow "recalling" the *Odyssey*). More importantly (as I show in Chapter 12), and in accordance with the findings of oral-traditional poetics, Odysseus makes use of a genre of discourse (didactic material about the good king) that can be identified as a free-standing traditional genre outside Greek (in this case, in Old Irish, Avestan, and Sanskrit texts). In other words, comparative literary analysis here allows one to transcend false dilemmas of relative chronology or borrowing, by pointing to a common generic (rather than textual) source.

The so-called "Orphic" tablets that I explore in Chapter 9, using detailed comparisons with several Homeric scenes, pose a similar challenge to text-based "intertextual" analysis. Here, too, the possibility must be left open that the composers of these miniature sets of instructions for the deceased bearer's behavior in the Underworld operated with the resources of traditional poetry. This corpus would have been well known to their local audiences, but was not necessarily in the form of our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The "performance" of reading such instructions—both the performance by the living initiate, when first instructed by an Orphic or Dionysiac *peritus*, as well as his or her projected posthumous "re-performance"—gained authority from the user's familiarity with epic conventions and episodes, and the initiate's awareness of underworld scenes in much longer narrative works.

Two other essays here attempt to read Greek poetic texts using our awareness of a specific globally-attested genre (lament, Chapter 14) or of particular tag-lines (*exodia*, Chapter 6) that, according to ancient lore found in Byzantine handbooks, marked the actual performances by rhapsodes, citharodes, and composers (or actors) of comedy and tragedy. Once more, the key factor for interpretation is an audience's awareness that the

language they are hearing, complete with a certain set of images, phrasings, and rhetorical stances, “belongs” to a genre *other* than that of the dominant narrative. To hear the underlying tone of Helen’s speeches within the *Iliad* requires awareness of the poetics of Greek laments (a topic about which we are informed by a continuous tradition lasting more than two millennia). It is true that a modern audience, even when unequipped with such deep local knowledge, can still feel the impact of Helen’s words. But the awareness generated by reference to the dynamics of lament performance provides a more historically authentic interpretation. Good philology and intellectual honesty require the reconstruction of contexts nearest to antiquity, rather than the privileging of our own thought-worlds.

Competition

An awareness of other ways of speaking, singing, and performing clings to any audience, ancient or modern. In a culture where certain genres have evolved continuously over generations, thick webs of association, built on recollection of virtuosos, remembrance of the most powerful (or failing) compositions and the contexts in which they first appeared, along with marked likes and dislikes, are to be expected. Film fandom, in contemporary life, offers a rough parallel. In the context of ancient poetic production, a further factor, quintessentially Greek, must be taken into account: performance is most often competitive. Many of our surviving texts are known to have originated in, or been subject to judgment in, formal settings like that of the Athenian *mousikoi agônes*. These most prominently featured, at the Panathenaea, rhapsodic recitation and contests in playing instruments, or singing to accompaniment; and at the Dionysia, contests in the performance of tragedy, comedy, satyr-play, and dithyramb. Again, the film world with its festivals (Cannes, Thessaloniki) and awards (Oscars, Golden Globes) provides something akin. It is not difficult to detect in a number of movies the urge to emulate winning (or high-grossing) recent films (Hollywood’s notion of success). The hidden world of writers, agents, and producers, fully aware of the evolving medium’s hits and flops, shapes the films we see. What did the equally intense competition mean for ancient poetic composition? In the case of comedy and tragedy, we have some clear examples: Aristophanes’ relationship to Euripides is a case in point.⁴⁸ But, once again, hexameter poems reveal less.

⁴⁸ See most recently Zuckerberg 2014 with further bibliography.

Six of the following chapters trace hints of rivalry, competition, and the clash (or uneasy accommodation) of poetic genres. Chapter 7 reads the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* in the light of biographical traditions about a contest between Homer and Hesiod (lore that originated in some form in the sixth century BCE). Here, the analysis relies on close readings of formulae and metrics, concluding that the two parts of the *Hymn* that have most often been analyzed as separate compositions were meant to imitate the stylistic voices of the two commanding figures of hexameter production. That hymnic poetry was itself most likely the object of recitation in rhapsodic contests lends another dimension to the substructure of generic rivalry that I uncover in the *Hymn*. Chapter 5 also originated, like Chapter 7, in a conference at the University of La Plata, Argentina (a decade later). It places the *Hymn to Apollo* in yet another competitive framework, with help from a reading of the stylistically cognate *Hymn to Hermes*. Here, the question is one of rhapsodic performance as opposed to the art of the citharode (singing to the accompaniment of a large and resonant concert-style stringed instrument). Since each art was legendarily associated with competitors at a leading festival (citharody at Delphi, rhapsody in Athens—although the Panathenaea also accommodated citharodic contests), one can imagine the mutual maneuverings of Hermes and his older half-brother Apollo regarding Hermes' invention the lyre as being based in performer-oriented assertions about the values of their own respective arts. To do so opens up new perspectives about the aesthetic effect of each performance genre. The coda in Chapter 5 on Poseidon's "crash-test" at Onchestus in Boeotia brings together the notions of competition with those of ritual and the act of judging (*krisis*). It is a reminder that Greek competitive events—athletic, musical, or other—were inevitably held under the aegis of heroes and gods.

Chapter 16 focuses on another scenario involving narrow escapes and the wreckage of chariots (like the rite for Poseidon in his Boeotian shrine). Not only is competition thematized overtly in Book 23 of the *Iliad*; it is clearly related to issues of poetic rivalry and endurance. The poem about Achilles was constructed to outpace others, aided by the poem's own assertions about "unwithering fame." Within that framework, the highlighted competition (a chariot-race), as I argue, reflects the poem's awareness of a number of other contests, from the Trojan War itself to its disputed longer-term impact on the landscape (e.g., the Achaean Wall, doomed to destruction, but kept intact in poetic memory).

Chapters 8 and 13 revolve around another form of competition, stemming from the repertoires of actual rhapsodic reciters. On the basis, once

more, of Plato's *Ion*, as well as from reports about Athenian ritual practitioners, we have evidence that compositions attributed to Orpheus were in general circulation, and performed rather than kept as esoteric documents. If we imagine that an audience for the *Nekuia* of *Odyssey* Book 11 has an awareness of such performances, and that the "Orpheus" repertoire included the famous visit of the mythical Thracian singer to the Underworld, the eye-witness account of his own *katabasis* given by Odysseus gains in depth and importance, since we must hear it as rivaling another singer's. The further irony—that Odysseus performs his autobiographical *mûthos* narrative explicitly "like a singer" (*Odyssey* 11.368), in close proximity to the professional court-poet Demodocus—underlines the theme of competition.

The *Shield of Heracles* attributed to Hesiod, the authorship of which was already disputed in the Hellenistic period, represents another relic of competitive composition, on my reading. From indications that such an extended *ekphrasis* could be performed as a stand-alone piece (a performance possibility known also from other oral traditions), we can imagine a three-way dynamic of emulation: the evolving Homeric *Iliad* embeds the extended device within Book 18 (describing Achilles' new armor); a version with a different aesthetic ("pulp," in my analysis) occupies most of a heroic narrative about Heracles; and the first portion of the *Shield of Heracles* is embedded in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*. As with the intriguing similarity between *Odyssey* 8.166–77 and *Theogony* 79–93 (examined in Chapter 12), chronological relations are impossible to establish. More relevant is the clear stylistic differentiation, of a sort that could arise in competitive contexts, as a way of swaying highly aware and experienced audiences. Finally, the slippery notion of "epic" as applied to ancient Greek verbal arts, and investigated in Chapter 1 in this volume, emerges as, at best, a retrospectively applied label. The study of poems as performances, which at one or more points were subject to the strains and stresses of agonistic composition—in-performance or recitation, justified considering even metapoetic genre classifications like "epic" as contested and negotiable, part of an ongoing shaping of Greek verbal art by its practitioners and audiences. As I formulate this situation, with reference to such competition: "The genre inhered in its performers. Neither formal nor thematic boundaries prevented rhapsodic cross-pollination."

Impersonation

Reading an early Greek hexameter poem—or any piece of verbal art, for that matter—we search out clues to help construct the figure of a narrator. The idea that a communication must have a specific speaker is the norm. With texts read in private, distanced from a performer, the construction of a speaker will vary according to the individual reader. In performance, on the other hand, an audience faces a living embodiment of the communication. The question for it then becomes: who does the person facing us pretend to be? We cannot affirm that rhapsodic reciters of Homer impersonated “Homer,” although they must have advertised, in the various discourses surrounding their performances, some affiliation to the traditional master-singer. As both actor and narrator, the Homeric reciter or poet slips in and out of many characters—now Odysseus (himself a master impersonator of other characters), now a god. More directly, the speaker of the *Hymn to Apollo* (line 172) poses as the “blind man” from rocky Chios, as he instructs a chorus of young women on Delos to speak of him in this manner, recommending him as the sweetest singer in whom they take pleasure, should someone ever ask (167–71).⁴⁹ It is the Hesiodic corpus, however, that offers the most fruitful opportunities for performers to make meaning by impersonation, and I have drawn out the implications of this in Chapters 10 and 11. While not openly declaring that the author of the *Theogony* is the singer or reciter appearing before an audience *hic et nunc*, the poem artfully elides its present narrator with that “Hesiod” whom the Muses once taught on Mt. Helicon (cf. *Theogony* 22 with *Hêsiodon* as object, shifting in line 24 to the apparently appositive *me*). The listeners and viewers of a performance of the *Works and Days*, finally, are led to believe (or make-believe) that the narrator is a small-scale farmer from Ascrea who has had a quarrel over inheritance with a brother Perses. And yet the audience at a festival where rhapsodes “do” Hesiod surely knows they are judging a professional reciter of hexameter. Much as the rhapsode Ion’s total involvement in re-presenting the heroic deeds within Homeric epic is aimed at engaging the audience on an emotional level, the various impersonations embedded in the hexameter corpus make possible a direct and dramatic impact. Keeping in mind the

⁴⁹ On the riddling self-identification, see Nagy 2009, 205–6.

dynamic bond between the audience as a group and the lone performer who addresses them, we may not find it accidental that the *Odyssey* as we have it, with its preposed “Telemacheia,” in effect positions the audience as impersonating the suitors of Penelope (the epic-internal group whom we first encounter as they are being entertained by a singer). I explore similar meta-poetic possibilities in Chapter 15. (The coda formed by Chapter 17 might be viewed as folding together competition and impersonation: Apollonius imitating Homer and Orpheus, while turning his new epic into a worthy rival of the works attributed to those older figures.)

To come full circle: if the first meaning of my title *Mythologizing Performance* can designate the sort of authoritative communication that commands attention—performance as *mûthos*—the second meaning (taking “mythologizing” as gerund instead of adjective) captures an essential further phenomenon. The effect in question must have arisen precisely from the nature of hexameter verse-making as a traditional, oral, performative art. The performer in a very tangible way embodies all earlier performers. (In this regard, the model for citharodic performance at Delphi, in which singers even dressed so as to imitate Apollo, is a template: see Chapter 5.) “This” poetic moment is like “that.” These figures of “myth” are creatures of the here-and-now. The power of poetry to make them come alive is the same force that enables the re-creators—“Homer,” “Hesiod,” and the rest—to locate their own origins in the legendary past, their performances effectively mythologized.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Nagy’s formulation of this effect (1996a, 223), slightly re-wording a sentence by T. S. Eliot, sums it up perfectly: “the most individual parts of his performance [Eliot: “work”] may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously.”

I

EPIC GENRE AND TECHNIQUE

EPIC AS GENRE¹

I. Introduction

If “epic,” ancient or modern, represents a “genre” in any meaningful sense, our first task should be not to enumerate the characteristics of a classification, but to ask what might be the ultimate usefulness, whether to literary criticism or cultural studies, of such categorizing. What do we gain from calling something an epic? Should the category therefore be as wide as possible or bounded and narrow? To answer fully, we need to look at the historical roots of our own taxonomy of genres in classical Greek sources (Part II, below), as well as at a broad range of contemporary comparative evidence from non-Western societies in which traditions seemingly comparable with classical “epic” exist (Part III).

The circularity in the latter procedure will be immediately apparent. If the first rule of the comparative method is to know what to compare, there will always be the chance that we do not know *enough*: that our initial selection of epic-like material from India, Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia somehow omits highly important poetry or prose that a Eurocentric mindset, raised on classical epic, cannot grasp as relevant. Even to divide verbal art into “poetry” and “prose” might turn out to be misleading, from the standpoint of non-Western traditions (as Dennis Tedlock and others have argued, focusing on native American works). But since every investigation needs to start somewhere, the critic’s hope is that the “hermeneutic circle” morphs into a spiral: that the initial selection prompts re-thinking of old classifications, and even leads to productive reactions by others working in different fields. Although this volume is concerned primarily with ancient

¹ Originally published in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, ed. J. M. Foley (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 9–19.

epic, from regions near the Mediterranean, it might lead to fresh analyses of compositions from many periods and places.

To enable this dialogue, and to prevent a premature canonization of “genre” that only impedes further understanding, we should begin with the assumption that “epic” is a contingent and culture-bound category. It may be “poetry” or “prose” or some *tertium quid*, by our reckoning. It may even look like what we would call “drama” or “lyric.” Despite such *formal* differences, many societies may share a *functionally* similar category. What this chapter will argue is that “epic,” applied to similar categories across cultures, plays a necessary role that *transcends* genre (thus making fruitless the attempt to pin it down as any single genre). In other words, “epic” stands out precisely by presenting itself, time after time, as the “natural” state of speech, the pre-existent mode, the word-before-genre, the matrix of other forms. And this consistent tendency can in turn best explain the semantic development and assumptions that have given us the very term that we are undertaking to analyze.

Ultimately, any concept of genre that underwrites the specific classification of “epic” should stress, above all, two *communicative* functions. First, as a means of channeling and clarifying communication between authors and readers (or performers and audiences), a shared genre acts as an agreement concerning the horizon of expectation, whether about the language, motifs, characterizations, themes, or even length of a given work. (We do not expect a “novella” to be 700 pages long. We might expect an “epic” performance to last at least an evening.) It is an implicit signaling device for senders and recipients of verbal art. Second, for those, like ourselves, removed in time from the immediate experience, genre forms an essential piece of cultural information. Knowing a culture’s genre system, and its network of associations, is as significant as learning about its history, geography, economy, or languages. Once the native system is elicited, we can compare it with those of other societies, just as we can compare languages. And as with any such anthropological explorations, the knowledge thereby gained only counts when taken further, as a means of fostering human communication. To put it negatively, we should not define “genre” or “epic” simply as an ideal Platonic form for static contemplation. Definitions need to be dynamic aids to learning and social integration.

Modern handbooks of literary terms, in defining “epic,” inevitably mention features of content, such as a cosmic scale; a serious purpose; a setting in the distant past; the presence of heroic and supernatural characters;

and plots pivoting on wars or quests. The presence or absence of any such features should not be decisive, however, in defining a genre. Nor because they happen to be common to both oral and written (or “primary” and “secondary” epic), can these features be seen as proof that a natural or universal “epic” form exists, since “secondary” epics are of course explicitly modeled on the former. Recent scholarship, by contrast, has deconstructed the wall between written and oral modes, and all but abandoned notions (going back to the early twentieth-century) of “primary” epic (supposedly, Homeric poetry, *Beowulf*, and most non-Western poems) as opposed to “secondary” epic (Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautica*, Vergil’s *Aeneid*, the works of Milton, Spenser, Tasso, etc.). The match between “primary” and “oral” was never satisfactory, anyway, since most of the compositions available to readers had long been texts, whatever their performance history. A better solution has been the recognition of “transitional texts” in the formulaic style typical of composition-in-performance. In addition, modern ethnographers can attest to the fluidity of the very idea of “text” in many cultures that are most productive of “epic.” Finally, the distinction between “primary” and “secondary” has been seen more recently to encode more insidious contrasts between “primitive” song produced by underdeveloped, often tribal groups and “cultivated” writing done by elite males, usually in the service of a developing nation-state. At its worst, the contrastive pair was just a polite substitute for the chauvinistic opposition of “pre-art” vs. “high art.”

What has led handbook writers to associate as “epics” such disparate compositions as *Beowulf* and *Paradise Lost*, over and above the features of content just mentioned, are roughly comparable formal features: the length of a poem; the very fact of poetic form (“heroic” verse lines); musical accompaniment or song style; highly rhetorical speeches by heroic figures; invocations or self-conscious poetic proems; similes; and “typical” or recurrent scenes and motifs. These formal features are usually treated rather clinically as isolated textual markers, rather than as intertwined relics of possible performances. For instance, length of composition is often considered an absolute, apart from possibly variable contexts of audience interaction. Was *Beowulf* ever longer or shorter and still, for medieval English hearers, the “same” poem? Does performance length depend on where the “epic” was shared (during work or festivals, in a royal hall or tavern)? Could a fifty-line version still be “*Beowulf*”? Does cosmic scale demand extreme length? By the same token, can the Old English *Seafarer* be “epic” (and if not, what genre is it)? Such questions arise especially with ancient texts for which we

have multiple versions, such as *Gilgamesh*. They can be approached, if not positively answered, by examining such Indic traditions as *Rāmcaritmānas*, of which even a brief song session by women at local shrines is still regarded as “epic” recitation. To take another example, long similes—seemingly the stock-in-trade of “epic” composition—turn out in many cultures to be poetic interludes consciously imported from companion traditions (what one might call “lyric”). In these cases, as in many others, contemporary performances force us to question traditional handbook definitions. “Epic” emerges as a notional instead of normative term.

II. Defining “Epic” in Ancient Greece

Thematic and formal features are inevitably joined in the handbook “epic” definitions by reference to the *Poetics* of Aristotle (384–322 BCE). As a wide-ranging scholar with access to written sources later lost, as well as to living traditions of composition and commentary, Aristotle must have first place in any discussion of ancient literary criticism. But one problem in treating him as an authority on ancient “epic” is that he is relentlessly literary. By his era, the tradition of Homeric poems had most likely passed through two if not three stages of crystallization, in oral and textual phases, with relative degrees of fixity and vastly different conditions of audience reception. Thus a fourth-century Athenian intellectual’s perception of “epic” gives no guarantee of resembling an eighth-century Ionian performer’s sense of his or her poetic repertoire. Paradoxically, performers of Homeric epic even in Athens, two centuries before Aristotle, may not have known that they were singing or reciting “epic.” That is to say, we can no more posit a cohesive and unchanged “Greek” notion of epic than we can a universal definition.

From the surviving early texts in hexameter (Homer, Hesiod, Homeric Hymns, Epic Cycle), it is clear that the word for the production of entertaining tales of heroes or gods to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument (*phorminx*) is “song” (*aoidē*) and the performers are “singers” (*aoidoi*): see, for example, the descriptions of the Ithacan bard Phemius (*Odyssey* 1.325–52) and the Phaeacian singer Demodocus (*Odyssey* 8.43–46, 469–521). But a synonym for long narrated stories can be *mûthos* (plural *muthoi*; in Homer, the word usually denotes “authoritative utterances”). For example, the heroes Nestor and Machaon “took delight in tales [*mûthoisi*] speaking in detail [*enepontes*] to one another” (*Iliad* 11.643). A minor

variation of the same poetic verse introduces the night-long narrative session shared by Odysseus and Penelope upon his return (*Odyssey* 23.301—note that the concluding portion of the hero's tale is called *epos*, 23.342). The main distinction between *oidê* and *mûthoi* seems to be whether music is involved, and whether the performer is a professional. Both Odysseus and Achilles straddle the line by being expert at *mûthos*-speech and also like bards (Achilles when he plays the *phorminx* at *Iliad* 9.186–91, Odysseus when compared to an enchanting singer at *Odyssey* 17.518–21). In fact, as we shall see, “epic” is most comparable to “myth” (the word derived ultimately from *mûthos*), both in archaic Greek terms and in the contemporary non-Eurocentric world.

For Aristotle in the *Poetics*, *mûthos* has what appears to be a completely different meaning than our word “myth.” He uses it to mean something like “plot” or more broadly “narrative” (see *Poetics* 1449b5–8). As we shall see below (part IV), this development is not unexpected given the earlier semantic range of *mûthos* before the fifth-century BCE. The further reach of the concept, as we see it in the *Poetics*, actually accords well with a similarly broad reach of “epic” both in classical sources and later. Yet despite the extensive cultural spread of both myth and epic in Greece, Aristotle significantly chooses as his centerpiece for an all-inclusive poetics the Athenian genre of tragedy. This has several implications. First, it means that he nowhere tries to define “epic” as a closed category distinct from other genres. Instead, because Aristotle always seeks to articulate the larger components in the construction of verbal art, he comments on features that usually overlap epic and tragedy, such as plot-structure, recognition, diction, and reversals of fortune (see, e.g., *Poetics* 1455b16). For Aristotle, drama is as self-evident and singular an experience as film is for us; opposing it to *epopoiia* (his word for “epic-verse-making” or “epic”) is more akin to contrasting film and “the novel” taken as a whole—without regard to particular sub-genres like romance, western, techno-thriller, mystery, or other. The smaller-scale features that might be used to separate out sub-categories of poetry are, for Aristotle, less important than the matter of imitation (*mimêsis*, his overarching concern in the *Poetics*). *Epopoiia* is one of six named types of performance—a mixed group we would consider untidy in its inclusion of musical arts such as pipe-playing and concert lyre-playing with tragedy, comedy, and dithyrambic poetry. All are supposed by him to be forms of “imitation,” but differing in their means, manners, or objects of representation (1447a). What distinguishes “epic” in this connection is its representation of characters who are “noble” or “people

of quality” (*spoudaios*; see *Poetics* 1449b10), a point to which we shall return. The mimesis is done by means of a particular meter (“heroic” verse, i.e., dactylic hexameter); at considerable length; with many episodes; through a combination of narrative and character speeches; and using elevated vocabulary and unusual words (1459b9–18). But these features are only noted by way of making the contrast with tragic drama, not in order to capture the essence of “epic.”

A second important implication of choosing tragedy as his model is that the spirit of competitive dramatic production in Athens infiltrates Aristotle’s own analysis. The habit of making value judgements must have been normal for Athenians of several generations, accustomed as they were to see one playwright each year awarded first place at the Dionysiac festival, by the decision of a citizen panel. Thus, though starting with a purely descriptive examination of the aspects of poetic mimesis, Aristotle in the *Poetics* shifts into a prescriptive and critical stance. He describes only partially “tragedy” or “epic,” before taking up the *best* way of making both. For the latter, this means that Homeric poetry eclipses any discussion of the genre as a whole, for Homer is judged best, by Aristotle, given his use of diction and “thought” (*dianoia*), of focused plots, and of plausible fictions (see *Poetics* 1459a17–1460a19). In short, Homeric poetry is best because it most closely approaches tragic drama.

We have dwelt on Aristotle’s treatise because, consciously or not, every writer and critic of Western epic since the fourth-century BCE has been influenced by its choices and assumptions. Although the elevation of Homeric epic to a place of primary importance, overriding numerous other hexameter poems in Greek, began most likely at a specific socio-political stage in sixth-century Athens, the reasoned approval of Aristotle ensured this canonization. When we peer around this brilliant spotlight of attention, trying to see within the shadows it has created, even the *Poetics* can provide tantalizing glimpses of a lost world of poetic art. That world, had it survived, might have radically altered later and modern notions of “epic” as a genre. A starting point for imagining this rich and varied archaic verbal tapestry comes from Aristotle’s own notion that Homer was not the composer of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* exclusively; he also authored the *Margites*, a poem (now almost entirely lost) using a mixture of hexameter and iambic meter to narrate the ridiculous adventures of a numbskull, the title figure. Aristotle places this composition within the category of “blame” or “lampoon” (*psogos*) and speculates that there must have been many such poems before Homer, although the *Margites* was the earliest to survive to his own day. As

with his general elevation of Homeric art, he finds the *Margites* to be far beyond the personal invective characteristic of *psogos*, and as much a model for later dramatic comedy as the Homeric epics were for tragedy (1448b38). The fourth-century philosopher clearly distinguishes this comic piece from the more serious compositions, mostly on the basis of its tone and object of *mimesis*. Whether the same generic distinction would occur to a performer or audience two or three centuries earlier is an open question.

Another way into the lost world of “epic”-like works, which may help us extract a definition of “epic” from Aristotle, is via meter. He himself uses the term *hêrôikon* to denote the meter of Homeric epic, but indirectly shows awareness that others (whom he does not name) call the same verse-form *epos* or *epê* (plural of *epos*); this much we can extrapolate from his corrective words (1447b15–18) chiding those who talk of *epopoioi* (“*epos*-verse-makers”) while referring only to the meter they use, not to the sort of imitation they pursue. In Aristotle’s view, this approach leads to absurdities, such as putting Homeric poetry into the same category as the verses of the philosopher Empedocles, although “there is nothing common to Homer and Empedocles except the meter” and the latter should be called “scientist” (*physiologos*) rather than poet. Reading this comment together with his further remarks on *mimesis*, one can see, first, that Aristotle intends to use the term *epopoia* more circumspectly, bringing it closer to what “epic” has meant since his time. Essentially, he defines it in terms of an attitude and style—high-language praise of the “serious.” But the second observation to be made—an interesting corollary—is that *some* of his contemporaries or predecessors were willing to elide such differences among poems as lay in content or attitude. For these anonymous others, *epopoia*, inasmuch as it signified the body of work in hexameters, composed by *epopoioi*, would have extended far beyond the circumference of Homeric or Aristotelian “epic.” It would most likely have included those poets (again, lost to us) whom Aristotle distinguishes from Homer on the basis of how they represented characters, whether like the norm (as did Cleophon) or worse (as did Hegemon of Thasos, the first to compose “parodies” (1448a13). Only in smug retrospect, however, can we say that these unnamed, all-embracing non-Aristotelians, embedded in their own historical periods and performance cultures, were wrong and Aristotle right.

As it turns out, we may have an interesting reference to such a broader sweep in the work of the historian Herodotus, who flourished a century before Aristotle. On one hand, Herodotus seems to share Aristotle’s view that *epopoiê* (“epic-verse-making,” in his Ionic dialect form) demands a

certain selectivity and seriousness. Significantly, Herodotus retrojects this view onto Homer himself (who, he believes, lived around the ninth-century BCE). Speaking of a version of the Trojan saga in which Helen with her paramour Paris visits Egypt on her way to Troy, the historian concludes (*Histories* 2.116.1): “And, in my opinion, Homer knew this story, too; but seeing that it was not so well suited [*euprepês*] to epic poetry [*epopoiîê*] as the tale of which he made use, he rejected it, showing that he knew it” (trans. Godley). After citing verses that he claims show Homer’s knowledge of the alternate version (*Iliad* 6.289–92, *Odyssey* 4.227–30, 351–52), Herodotus remarks on an inconsistency with yet another version to argue that “the Cyprian verses [*Kupria epea*] are not the work of Homer but of someone else” (*Histories* 2.117.2).

The poem he alludes to—now known as the *Cypria* and surviving only in a few quotations—was clearly “epic” in having thematic and formal features found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Yet the historian’s phrase can denote either “epic poetry” or “hexameter verses.” This ambiguity, frequent in the classical period, on the other hand makes it possible that a poem decidedly *non*-Homeric in its themes might also have been “epic” to Herodotus and his audiences. The composition in question, cited for its ethnographic details, is referred to as “the epic/hexameter verses [*epea*] now called by the Greeks *Arimaspea*” (4.14.3) and attributed to one Aristeas of Proconessus, a Greek town in Asia Minor: “This Aristeas, possessed by Phoebus, visited the Issedones; beyond these (he said) live the one-eyed Arimaspians, beyond whom are the griffins that guard gold, and beyond these again the Hyperboreans, whose territory reaches to the sea” (trans. Godley). The mention of divine possession by Apollo and mythical wonders already marks a great gulf between this archaic poem and the generally more realistic Homeric epic, although Herodotus does say that Aristeas got his stories of one-eyed men and griffins as hearsay from the Issedones (4.16.1). More astounding is the biography of the poet: according to tales Herodotus has heard, Aristeas dropped dead in a fuller’s shop, vanished before burial, and reappeared alive seven years later, at which point he composed the poem about his wanderings. He vanished again, turning up 240 years later in a Greek settlement in southern Italy, where he announced (before his final disappearance) that Apollo had blessed the townspeople with a divine visit and that he himself had followed the god in the form of a crow.

Scholars have rightly seen in this weird tale a memory of age-old shamanistic practices, involving out-of-body experiences and animal transformation. How could such a poem, though *epea* (i.e., hexameter verses) be “epic”?

Before we too quickly eliminate it from the category or narrow our definition, it is worth recognizing the strong family resemblances between the *Arimaspea* and another travel narrative, the *Odyssey*. We might especially be reminded of the first-person wonder-tales of Odysseus in Books 9–12 of the *Odyssey*. Those adventures, in turn, resemble what we know of at least one hexameter poem attributed to the mythical Orpheus, telling of his descent to the Underworld. Orpheus, the magical singer, able to move trees and animals with his song, bears more than a passing resemblance to a shaman, as many have seen; his association with the initiatory-quest epic, the *Argonautica*, draws us closer to more familiar “epic” territory. Finally, the stories of the shaman-like adventures of the philosopher-priest Pythagoras, to whom hexameter verses were also attributed, fit into this expanded “wonder epic” category.

The usefulness of such a broadened class, within Greek tradition, becomes clear when we look once again at the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The audiences for both epics surely obtained additional meanings from the way in which these poems drew on material with an oblique connection to their more obvious “heroic” themes. Just as the *Odyssey* can be seen as expanding itself by way of the poetry of shamanic quest, the *Iliad* can be observed complicating its plot through the inclusion of a quest and trickster figure, Odysseus. Such a lateral, relational approach might even lead us at this point to formulate a further definition of genre: a set of allowable intertexts (oral or written), embracing all those compositions that communicate through consistent mutual allusivity. (It should be noted that the set also allows for “null allusion”—that is, for producing a point precisely by refusing to make overt reference to one or another contemporary and related tale or poem-type.) If the *Iliad* cannot be fully appreciated without the figures, themes, or diction of other Trojan War sagas, in whatever form these existed, these others qualify for inclusion in the genre. The Epic Cycle, a series of poems in hexameter that gained shape in the eighth through fifth centuries BCE, would, for example, fit this definition. So would the *Theogony*, the *Shield of Heracles*, and the *Catalogue of Women* attributed to Hesiod. The *Theogony*, a poem of about 1000 lines telling of Zeus’ rise to power, has even been read as the heroic biography of the chief god, although the story is framed by the first-person introduction of the poet himself, singing of his initiatory encounter with the muses on Mt. Helicon. As Jenny Strauss Clay and Leonard Muellner have shown, the long narrative Homeric hymns also form a close bond with the fore-mentioned compositions. Both these and the shorter hymns in the collection seem to have functioned, at some stage, as preludes to longer “epic” compositions.

If we continue to open the field to admit such verses, how then does one prevent a notional “genre” of epic, even within Greek, from becoming too unwieldy a tool? More bluntly, what is *not* epic? How, for instance, would we account for another long hexameter poem, the *Works and Days*, which includes a narrative of conflict (Hesiod and his brother Perses, apparently feuding over an inheritance), but also includes proverbs and maxims, fables with a political point, and advice on farming and ritual? What of those diverse (now fragmentary) compositions that seem to have been swept together and placed under the name of the Boeotian “peasant” poet—the *Instructions of Cheiron*, *Bird-Prophecy*, *Marriage of Ceyx*, *Descent of Theseus to the Underworld*, *Astronomy*, etc.? Such apparently non-“epic” verse can have a mutually allusive interconnection with what became, in time, mainstream Homeric epic. For example, the Hesiodic *Works and Days* in its lengthy meditation on “right” justice (*dikē*) makes an indispensable poetic counterpart to the central themes of both the *Iliad* (the disputes between Agamemnon and Achilles, Achaeans and Trojans) and the *Odyssey* (the vengeance on the hubris of the suitors). By the same token, the *Theogony* puts in dogmatic form the key points, in similar formulaic phrases, that Odysseus uses to instruct the Phaeacian nobility in Book 8 of the *Odyssey*. Again, the *Odyssey* features an extended “catalogue” of heroic women in the Underworld scene of Book 11, which even in antiquity was matched with the Hesiodic *Catalogue*. Clearly, generic interplay and expansion, allusion and multiformity, were essential to the art of *epopoia* in archaic Greek. It does not make sense to isolate only some of the resultant multilayered compositions as “epic.”

A straightforward assumption can account for the tight bonds among all these hexameter poems: namely, the existence, from at least the sixth-century BCE, of travelling reciters or singers, called “rhapsodes” (“song-stitchers”), at least some of whom traced their ancestry to the master singer Homer himself. These shapers of the canon in any given generation could define “epic” simply as the substance of their repertoire. They could also explicitly cross-reference, and explain to audiences, the complex ways in which the mythological, heroic, and “folk” lore of their poems fit together. We know, from depictions in Plato’s *Ion*, *Republic*, and *Laws* (among other sources) that the rhapsodic repertoire included poetry attributed to Homer and Hesiod, as also Orpheus, Musaeus, and other shadowy earlier poets. In sum, the genre inhered in its performers. Neither formal nor thematic boundaries prevented rhapsodic cross-pollinization. Our notion of “epic”

will not be too large if it expands to fit the performance repertoire of these important figures and, by extension, the cognitive and aesthetic capabilities of their audiences.

III. “Epic” Cross-Culturally

“Epic”—or any other literary genre—cannot be classified apart from the performers who transmit it. One can even argue, as Gregory Nagy does, that the invention of “genre” as a system of categories in Greek literary history only occurs when the oral-traditional performances of the archaic period are reduced to writing, mostly during the fifth century BCE, and the originating events lost or forgotten. “Genre,” in this regard, is a tool for scholars and librarians. This is not to say that poets themselves never had an awareness of technical and thematic distinctions among, for example, verses to honor gods, tell of heroic deeds, mock social offenders, or accompany religious processions. But this was a matter of implicit poetics, both performers and audiences following what tradition suggested.

A review of contemporary verbal art in sub-Saharan Africa, India, and Egypt will show that the fluidity of early Greek modes—and, as far as we can tell, that of Near Eastern ancient epic—is the norm in traditional societies. At the same time, we shall see:

- that while something resembling “epic” *can* be distinguished *from* other forms, it is even more significant to see it *in relation to* its accompanying genres in performance
- that the specifics of textual or performance style cannot be used to determine whether or not a performance is “epic”
- that the epic “genre” has symbiotic ties with folktale, myth, and especially praise-poetry
- that, above all, epic stands out as the most pervasive, “unmarked” genre, in terms of when and where it can be performed, while at the same time it is the culturally most significant and “marked” form in terms of its ambitions and attitudes.

These observations, brief as they are, can help us to re-think the classical and Western notion of “epic,” while leading us to a deeper sense of the limits and possibilities of genre definitions.

Let us begin with the issue of boundaries. Daniel Biebuyck places the *Mwindo* narrative from the Congo within an array of other distinct verbal

art-forms practiced by the Nyanga people. Significantly, the sequenced singing and recitation of long narratives (*kárisi*) incorporates these other genres of discourse: proverbs, riddles, and prayers in poetic form, eulogistic recitations, formulas used by diviners and medicine men, personal songs, animal tales, instructions, and political advice, all find a place within *Mwindo*. Such generic inclusiveness is common throughout African epic narrative. A crucial further point can be adduced from the work of Dwight Reynolds on the *Sirat Bani Hilal*, as performed in northern Egypt. Reynolds points out that the urge to treat as the “epic” the pure story-line of one Bedouin tribe’s exploits must be resisted, if one is to appreciate the full impact of the performance. The Egyptian bard always dovetails his singing with two other equally important and formally different components, the praise of Mohammad (*madih*) and proverbial advice in lyric form (*mawwal*). More surprisingly, even when *within* the epic a character is about to speak, the same canonical sequence of genres occurs. In short, the “epic” must be taken as total social event including audience interaction, instrumental music, and these framing genres, not just the “text” we might want to cull from it.

We know that epic recitation was preceded by proems resembling the Homeric hymns (see Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 3.104). As mentioned above, Homeric and Hesiodic poems could be recited by the same rhapsodic performers. The Hesiodic corpus encompasses proverbial lore in diction and structures that have been compared to Greek lyric. In short, one can imagine an ancient Greek performer sequencing exactly the same functionally similar genres as the Egyptian bards—praise (*humnoi*); wisdom (*gnômai*), and “epic” (narrowly conceived). Furthermore, it can be argued that Greek epic not only can be *framed by* but itself consciously *embeds* such sub-genres as praise and blame poetry, maxims, and lyric similes (see further part IV).

Such fluid genre boundaries relate to the wide range of “epic” performance styles, both in the course of one composition and across regions. Mande hunters’ epics comprise three genres—narrative, song, and praise proverbs—and hence three performance styles. In Central African epic traditions, it is common for the main reciter to be accompanied by backup singers performing melodic portions organic to the tale (often the character’s “speech” as song). The Nyanga bard dances and dramatically mimes parts of *Mwindo*, even taking on the hero’s role, while select respondents repeat his verses (compare the narrative and dance event described at *Odyssey* 8.255–369). In contrast to Central African multi-media productions, West

African performances, such as the widespread *Sunjata* epic, often feature a solitary reciting *griot*. (There are many local indigenous names for this role, which combines historian, praise-poet, herald, and arbitrator.) One such, the Maninka *jeli*, recites the epic at high speed, accompanying himself on a small four-string instrument.

Joyce Flueckiger's research in northern and central India shows not only that "epic" can be done in widely different styles, but that even the same long, heroic narrative, like the Dhola-Marū tradition, sung in communities a few hundred miles apart, qualifies as "epic" in one but not the other. Community self-identification, caste ambitions, and local religious cult all determine whether a people views the epic as its own defining narrative.

If content or consistent style fail to demarcate contemporary "epic," neither do the Eurocentric contrasts with "folktale" or "myth." For example, the *mvèt* narrations of the Fang (southern Cameroon, Gabon) recount episodic struggles between two clans, a mortal and immortal. There is no central protagonist; magical elements abound, along with romance or folk-tale motifs. Yet the night-long narrations function like other Central African epics to address the society's abiding concerns. Their human quest stories are simply a strand in a much larger tapestry of cosmic issues—how plants, animals, and social hierarchies came to be. In Greek, we might at first perceive fewer cosmic issues in the martial or adventure epics. But the Hesiodic corpus, especially the *Catalogue of Women*, is clearly related to local concerns, rites, and tales; the *Theogony* embodies an entire cosmology. The investigations of Georges Dumézil have been especially useful in illustrating how "epic" in Greece, and even more so in the related languages of Iceland, Ireland, India, and Rome, is often a matter of cosmic myths, historicized and secularized.

Myth and folktale might be considered the deeper roots of epic, yet they can just as easily be synchronic and interactive with epic. It is perhaps best to think of them along a spectrum, with audience interest the determining factor in how unspecified, as to time and place, a story can be, and what belief it engenders. A different dynamic exists between epic and praise poetry. As described by Africanists, praise-poetry is an allusive, highly compressed, and non-narrative evocation of the genealogies and successes of chieftains. Marked by often obscure, riddling names, brief references to events, and a repetitive, incantatory style, this genre is more widespread than epic, especially in southern and eastern Africa. Instead of a range on a spectrum, the praise-poem is a telescope: what is compressed in a style that imitates the instantaneous exultation of a client before his patron, in epic is

expanded to fill out chronology, cause, and characterization. While praise (often in second-person address) is more direct and more lucrative, epic (usually third person) is more lucid. The dynamic interaction of praise and epic should make us think of such poetic forms as ancient Greek *epinikia* and *enkômia*, as preserved mainly in the work of Pindar (circa 518–438 BCE), often noted for the same features—allusive, elliptical, gnomic, and narrative only in a kernel form. Medieval Irish bardic verse and prose sagas exhibit a similar kernel-and-expansion relationship. Whether or not we construct a diachronic development from praise poetry to epic, the synchronic reality of their interdependence must be kept in mind.

In brief, contemporary “epic” stands in at least three typological relationships to other types of verbal art. It can (1) incorporate *smaller* forms (proverbs, songs, etc.). It can (2) embody an entire *deep* form, providing epic skin for the bones of myth or folktale concerns; and it can (3) expand a socially functional *kernel* form, praise-poetry. Furthermore, all three relations can occur simultaneously, as in the *Sunjata*. The many versions available (1) feature songs of *griots* and wise sayings; (2) embody a folktale type of the boy’s success story, about a marginalized mother-son dyad and its rise to power; and (3) contain frequent formulaic praises of the hero as founder of the kingdom of Mali (and of his griot as ancestor of modern singers). Perhaps, indeed, we should define epic as that form that consistently represents all three of the above relations.

The *expansiveness* of epic as “super-genre” brings us, finally, to observe a matching *pervasiveness* on the level of performance. From the accounts of numerous ethnographers, it is clear that “epic” events are unconfined in contrast to most other stylized verbal art, and not pinned to authorized occasions, rituals, or audiences, such as initiatory groups. Epic can be sung in almost every setting, by professionals or amateurs. Just as epic as *actual* performance functions as a soundstage, an environment for setting off all sorts of smaller genres, so epic as *possible* performance is equivalent to the cultural environment itself, ready to be instantiated and evoked at any moment. As dozens of field studies show, the total “epic” is, in fact, never performed unless elicited by an outsider, such as the folklorist. Yet even when it is brought forth, as usually, in shorter episodic form, the performance depends on an audience and performer’s unspoken awareness of the *totality* of a story and its conceivable permutations. In potential size, epic is hugely ambitious, undertaking to articulate the most essential aspects of a culture, from its origin stories to its ideals of social behavior, social structure,

relationship to the natural world and to the supernatural. The scope of epic is matched by its attitude: as Aristotle noted, it dwells on the serious. (Even its meter, says Aristotle, is “most stately and weightiest”: *stasimôtaton kai onkôdestaton*, *Poetics* 1459b34–5.) Epic, the ultimate metonymic art-form from the perspective of its *pars pro toto* performance, is on the level of ideology a metonymy for culture itself.

IV. Coda

At this point, we might return to a significant conundrum within ancient Greek semantics, one already alluded to above. *Mûthos*, the word that gives us “myth,” denotes in Homeric epic an authoritative utterance. It marks usually a long and detailed speech most often performed before a critical audience, expecting assent, and in the sub-genre mode of a command, an insult, or a detailed act of memory-recitation. This might sound like a good synonym for “epic” itself, which, as we have seen, in scope and ambition is homologous with “myth” in the societies where it flourishes. Oddly enough, the word that gives us “epic” is, in fact, *contrasted*, within our oldest Greek poetry, with *mûthos*. It can be described, within the synchronic system of Homeric diction, as unmarked. *Epos* usually refers to short utterances; non-public “sayings”; brief ordinary remarks; or intimate communication, as between husband and wife or hero and companion. Later, the plural *epea* comes to mean, as we have seen, “hexameter verses” or “epic,” whereas within Homer this plural (but not the singular) can be a synonym for *mûthos*. How does this transformation occur? Are we dealing with an historical development or something deeper, embedded in the very nature of an art-form? In the light of the Greek evidence above, particularly about the status of *epos* as both *marked* (in literary history) and *unmarked* (in Homeric diction), we might notice that “epic” as a genre, as seen from a non-Western stance, illustrates exactly this paradoxical bifocal relationship. On the one hand, it is as pervasive as everyday speech—intimate, simple, potential in any utterance. It can happen at any time; it can embody any matter and make it significant. On the other, “epic”—like the plural *epea* and especially its most famous occurrence, in the formulaic phrase describing speech as *epea pteroenta* “winged words”—is a mode of total communication, undertaking nothing less than the ideal expression of a culture. If the usefulness of “genre” is to provide a heuristic tool for honing inter-cultural communication, the good

of “epic” lies in its power to craft, through generations of performers and audiences, larger harmonies, in which the discrete pieces of the individual’s life fit and make sense.²

² For surveys and analyses of contemporary epics, see Beissinger et al. 1999; Hatto and Hainsworth 1980/1989; Oinas 1978; Okpewho 1992; and Reichl 1992. On larger questions of genre in ancient texts: Depew and Obbink 2000. On genres in performance: Bauman 1992; Bynum 1976. On native genre categories: Bauman and Sherzer 1989. For the poetry/prose distinction: Tedlock 1983 and Fine 1984. The notion of transitional texts is examined in Lord 1995; J. M. Foley 1990 and 1991. Key explorations of the formation of Greek notions about epic are: González de Tobia 2014; Ford 1997; and Nagy 1999a. On Aristotle’s contribution: Halliwell 1986 and Richardson 1992; on the Epic Cycle: Burgess 2001; and on other Greek epics: Huxley 1969. On *mûthoi* as “tales,” see Edmunds 1997. For the semantics of *mûthos* and *epos*: Martin 1989. On the relationship between lyric and epic traditions: Nagy 1990; on rhapsodes and text fixation: Nagy 1996a, 1996b, 2002; on shifts in performance style and genres: Phillips 1981. Valuable analyses of “epic” cross-culturally are Belcher 1999 and Stone 1988 (African); Biebuyck and Mateene 1969 (*Mwindo* epic of Nyanga); Austen 1999 (*Sunjata*); Reynolds 1995 and 1999; and Slyomovics 1987 (Egyptian); and Flueckiger 1989 and 1999 (Indic).

SIMILES AND PERFORMANCE¹

The linguist Michel Bréal, better known as a semanticist than Homerist, had been a teacher of Antoine Meillet, the great comparatist who succeeded him in the chair in comparative grammar of the Collège de France.² Bréal's little book *Pour mieux connaître Homère* is actually cited once by Meillet's student Milman Parry in *L'Épithète traditionnelle*, to the effect that the fixed epithet provides not only a rest to the singer but a pause for the audience.³ It is not his view on the formula, however, that seems to me an appropriate introduction to this paper, but Bréal's remarks on the simile:

These comparisons, which the poet draws out pleasantly, where he often adds several verses not at all necessary, are completely the opposite of popular poetry, which, if it sees a resemblance, says it in a word without dwelling on it. To enjoy these models of descriptive style would require an audience with time to spare, and, moreover, one with a taste for little tableaux.

Similes, he continues, are “pieces which are apparently out of place, which have the look of borrowings from another literary genre.”⁴ This pronouncement will serve nicely to summarize my argument: in short, I will suggest that Bréal is wrong when it comes to similes in oral poetry but quite right in speculating on another genre as their source. I want to show that similes in Homeric poetry play a role that we can only fully appreciate after examining living oral performances from a range of cultures, performances which feature a number of compositional devices, including similes. I will argue that a major effect of similes in performance has been neglected

¹ Originally published in *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*, ed. E. J. Bakker and A. Kahane (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997b), 138–66.

² See Meillet 1966, 440–53.

³ Parry 1971, 171; Parry cites the 1906 edition.

⁴ Bréal 1911, 107; my translations.

thus far in Homeric studies, but that this effect is, in fact, analogous to the one achieved in non-Western performances by other genres interacting with epic. Finally, I will attempt to show through linguistic analyses that similes are affiliated with, and may be taken from, the epic performers' prior knowledge of *non-epic* Greek poetic genres. In the end, I believe we can come away from such an exploration with a new appreciation for the component arts that went into the complex craft of Homeric verse-making.

As in any comparative enterprise, we must begin with an internal analysis. What do similes accomplish *within* the Homeric poems? Given the tendency in Classics for interpretive modes to drop from sight and return generations later unchanged by subsequent advances in literary theory, it will be more efficient to sketch out the three basic modes of answering this question, rather than attempt a chronological history of critical stances. These can be characterized as *rhetorical*, *thematic*, and *rhythmic*. It is not surprising that there is a correlation between these modes and varying historically conditioned views on the nature of Homeric poetry. When the text is still imagined, in some dim way, as a sort of performance, the rhetorical interpretation of similes prevails; once the poems are taken up as artifacts rather than as enactment, especially in the early part of the twentieth century, thematic and ultimately structural criticism holds sway.⁵

The rhetorical critique of similes permeates the ancient hermeneutic tradition, in which similes are primarily interpreted as affective devices. Our sources for this mode comprise mainly the scholia to the poems, themselves deriving in turn largely from Peripatetic treatments both of Homeric *crucis* (such as Aristotle's *Homeric Problems*) and more generally of discourse (such as his *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*).⁶ Using Erbse's index to the *Iliad* scholia, one can survey the words *homoiôsis* "likening" and *parabolê* "comparison" to gain some idea of this rhetorical mode.⁷

Most noticeable in such a survey of the scholia is the concern of the commentator with the appropriateness of the comparison to the specific narrative moment. For example, at *Iliad* 5.487, when Sarpedon uses a simile in his rebuke to Hector, and says "watch out that you do not become prey and a find for the enemy, like ones caught in the mesh of an all-catching net," the scholiast remarks "the *homoiôsis* is apt [*oikeia*] as of many different

⁵ Two more recent books now examine and illustrate in depth diverse modern approaches to the similes: the performance-centered (Ready 2011) and the text-thematic (Scott 2012).

⁶ On the Peripatetic roots of Hellenistic criticism see Richardson 1992 and Porter 1992.

⁷ Erbse 1988.

men being surrounded and caught like fish.”⁸ Equally important for the ancient commentators are the ways in which similes bring a scene vividly before the eyes.⁹ Of the simile that compares the Trojan onrush at 15.381 to waves swamping a boat, the scholiast says, “The poet always surpasses himself in comparisons—for what could be more vivid, more emphatic, or altogether more concordant [*sumphonôteron*]?”¹⁰

The usefulness of the simile for heightening emotion and for creating *pathos* is commonly noted by the scholiasts.¹¹ We should realize, also, what the scholiasts *do not* do: there are no attempts at “symbolic” interpretation or cross-referencing to similes in other books of the poems, no attempt to treat these devices as part of a larger pattern. The mode can be called rhetorical because the interpreter is mainly concerned with the immediate role that a particular trope plays in persuading an audience of the reality of the narrative. Richardson remarks that it is easy to disparage the scholiasts’ approach to similes, but more valuable to see “how often the scholia do in fact appreciate more fully than we do the way which the similes enhance the poem.”¹² One could expand on this to observe that the ancient interpretive tradition even in its late “scholiastic” form preserves in this rhetorical mode more of a sense of the poem as performance—albeit something more akin to oratory—than do subsequent interpretive modes. Though Richardson does not make much of the fact, he points out that the Townleian scholiast to *Iliad* 16.131 even comments on how this section of the *Iliad*, the arming of Patroclus, should be performed: “It is necessary to recite [*prophēresthai*] these verses in a rush [*speudonta*] expressing the yearning for the end.” The phrasing, “*epipothêsin tês exodou mimoumenon*,” could also be translated as “representing” or “imitating” the “desire for the end.” Of course, we might think first of all of rhapsodic performance, which, in Plato’s *Ion*, resembles a kind of dramatic representation. But the further point to make here is that the representation involved is actually triplicate: the performer’s desire to bring about an effective *exodos*; the desire of Patroclus, the character he represents, to achieve an end to battle; and finally, the *audience*’s desire to see and feel the most satisfying conclusion. “Miming a desire” is a beautifully apt way of describing what we know happens in interactive oral performances of epic, where performers enact what

⁸ Erbse 1971, 73.

⁹ Richardson 1980.

¹⁰ Erbse 1975, 91.

¹¹ Griffin 1976.

¹² Richardson 1980, 80.

audiences want, using all the poetic and musical resources at their disposal.¹³ It is stunning that the scholiast preserves a sense of this interaction.

The scholiasts do in fact consider Homer to be thus engaged with his narrative, almost in the manner of a participant on one side. On *Iliad* 11.558–62, the bT scholia notice the simile comparing Ajax to a stubborn donkey whom the Trojans, like boys with sticks, try to dislodge from a field: “The *parabolê* is to show contempt of the Trojans [*pros kataphronêsin tôn Trôôn*] because he [Ajax] flees Zeus not them.” By means of the simile Homer scores a point against the adversary. This agonistic language appears in an explicit reference to poetics, in the bT scholia to *Iliad* 12.278–86, a simile comparing flying weapons to a snowfall. The poet had used a more compact version of the image earlier in the book, at line 156:

They threw as they defended themselves and the huts
and the swift ships.
They flew like snowflakes [*niphades ... hôs*] to the ground, which the
blowing wind, whirling the dark clouds, sheds thick
on the nourishing earth.

When the poet expands the image and applies it to a shower of rocks at lines 278–86, the scholiast says, “The poet seems to hold a contest with himself regarding the comparison. He elaborates it more magnificently.” To sum up, the ancient mode of interpreting similes in the scholia imagines something like the conditions of oral performance, even down to the milieu of contest and poetic heroics.

In describing the more familiar, second mode, the thematic, I want to focus on a paradox. We might have imagined that the study of similes would change radically after Parry and Lord’s work became assimilated by a generation of classicists. Instead, what happened shows how a dominant intellectual paradigm redirects new advances. For the work of Moulton, published in 1977, can be seen to rely essentially on the same interpretive strategies as the well-known book by Hermann Fränkel, brought out by the same press fifty-six years before. This, despite the publication in 1974 of William Scott’s book, a reworking of the dissertation he completed at Princeton ten years before.¹⁴

Scott had shown that the style of repetition-plus-variation visible in the similes marked it as an oral art form parallel in its workings to the deployment

¹³ Some fine recent accounts include Blackburn, Claus et al. 1989; Lutgendorf 1991; Mills 1990; Basso 1985; Moyle 1990; Connelly 1986.

¹⁴ Scott 1974; Fränkel 1921.

of epithets and the construction of type-scenes. But his useful lists and typologies seem not to have produced new work specifically focused on the *implications* of an orally generated simile.¹⁵ Moulton in his introduction, after acknowledging Scott's approach, argues for subtle patterning of similes in relation to narrative structure, characterization, and themes. In this project, Moulton is largely successful. But he is also simply returning to the path that Fränkel trod. In both, the interpretive strategy is to group together similes by content and then analyze each as the expression of a larger theme. Fränkel, discussing the snow similes in Book 12, first finds all the other examples of the image and contrasts the somber, threatening mood of these (as far as can be determined from the contexts) with the modern reader's responses, our *Schneegefühle*.¹⁶ Where Moulton makes an advance over Fränkel is in his demonstration that the *succession* of similes forms a running commentary on the action within the narrative. Similes are "synergetic" with narrative. Of course, this interpretation depends on a prior assumption about the mood of an individual simile, sometimes, for instance, at the level of a diffuse fire and light imagery.¹⁷ The strategy is static because it insists on the text as a closed set of tropes, balanced against or connected to one another, but appreciated fully only in retrospect, not at the moment of performance but in the leisure of re-reading. If the discussion of fire imagery in such a framework reminds us of Cedric Whitman's brilliant chapter on the same topic, and Moulton's charts begin to resemble the famous outline of the Geometric *Iliad*, it is not, I think, coincidental.¹⁸ The resemblance goes to the heart of the critical method shared by most Anglo-American literary critics, especially classicists, until recently.¹⁹ The dominant mode of close (and closed) reading directs them away from the full implications of oral poetics. Their shared method can be characterized by the summing-up statement in the chapter on image in Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature*, that *vade mecum* of New Criticism: "Like meter, imagery is one component structure of a poem. In terms of our scheme, it is part of the syntactical, or stylistic, stratum. It must

¹⁵ On similar lags in modern Homeric criticism, see Martin 1989, 1–4 and 1993, 222–28.

¹⁶ Fränkel 1921, 32.

¹⁷ Moulton 1977, 76–86.

¹⁸ Whitman 1958, 249–84.

¹⁹ On the persistence of this method see de Jong and Sullivan 1994, 1–8. The method is still at work in Lonsdale 1990.

be studied, finally, not in isolation from the other strata, but as an element in the totality, the integrity, of the literary work.”²⁰

Rather than denigrating either rhetorical or thematic approaches, I am urging a marriage of the two. We have to consider for any given simile both the local immediate affective strategies at work, and the wider-reaching thematic purposes. But these are not the whole story. There is room for, and I would hold, a need for, a third approach, which we might call the “rhythmic.” Let us imagine the similes as they would come to the ear of an audience during the performance of Homeric epic. The most noticeable feature of similes, when we do this, is the way in which they punctuate the narrative, giving it an almost musical rhythm and providing episodic definition. In fact, in the midst of the *Iliad*’s battle books, we begin to expect similes; Tilman Krischer has shown that they are an intimate part of the technique, not simply a relief from what modern readers consider tediously boring slaughter.²¹

To illustrate the rhythmic function of the similes, and explain why we come to expect them, I provide below a sample analysis of one of the *Iliad*’s longer books, with similes marked in relation to episodes. I have done the same for a number of other books, with similar results. A look at the breakdown here will show what I consider to be the key performance factor in the uses of similes—namely, the way in which they demarcate narrative segments:

Interaction of similes and episodes in *Iliad* 11.

1–14	Zeus sends Eris, who rouses Achaeans
15–46	Agamemnon arms
47–61	Both sides prepare for battle
62–66	<i>Hector = star, his armor = lightning</i>
67–73 `	<i>Troops = rows of reapers, wolves</i>
73–83	Disposition of the gods (omitted by Zenodotus, athetized by Aristophanes and Aristarchus)
84–90 `	<i>Timing of conflict = woodcutter’s day</i>
91–112	Killings by Agamemnon
113–21 `	<i>Agamemnon = lion, Trojans = deer</i>
122–29	Agamemnon pursues two Trojans until they stop
129–30 `	<i>Agamemnon stands against them like a lion</i>
131–55	Speech of suppliant warriors
136–42	Agamemnon refuses them
143–46	Agamemnon kills them

²⁰ Wellek and Warren 1962, 211. This approach appears even in a theoretically sophisticated book, Nimis 1987, which is still mainly interested in semantic associations and long-distance thematic bundling.

²¹ Krischer 1971, 36–75.

147	<i>He rolls one like a holmos</i>
148–54	General chase
155–58	<i>Agamemnon = fire in forest</i>
159–62	Description of aftermath
162–71	Chase goes to Skaian gates
172–78	<i>Fleeing ones = cows, pursuers = lions</i>
179–217	Aftermath and Zeus' promise to Hector
218–263	Agamemnon's opponents
264–68	Agamemnon's pain worsens
269–72	<i>His pain = woman's in labor</i>
273–83	Agamemnon leaves battle
284–91	Hector urges on the Trojans
292–98	<i>Hector = hunter, gust of wind</i>
299–304	Hector's opponents
305–9	<i>Hector = west wind</i>
310–23	Diomedes and Odysseus begin killings
324–27	<i>The heroes = boars among dogs</i>
328–35	They take sons of Merops
336–67	Hector vs. Diomedes
368–95	Diomedes vs. Paris
396–400	Diomedes retreats wounded
400–10	Odysseus' soliloquy
411–13	Trojan ranks close in
414–19	<i>Trojans = dogs around boar</i>
420–55	Odysseus' killings, fight with Sokos
456–73	Odysseus calls for help, Ajax and Menelaus respond
474–84	<i>Trojans = jackals</i>
485–91	Ajax attacks Trojans
492–97	<i>Ajax = rushing river</i>
498–509	Hector battles near the river
510–20	Nestor leads away Machaon
521–42	Kebriones urges Hector to aid others; he does
543–47	Ajax in fear
548–57	<i>Ajax in retreat = lion from cattle</i>
558–65	<i>Ajax = donkey beset by boys</i>
566–74	Ajax slowly retreats under attack
575–95	Eurypylos going to help is wounded
596	<i>All fight like fire</i>
597–618	Achilles sees Nestor coming back and summons Patroclus
619–44	Nestor refreshes Machaon
645–803	Nestor welcomes Patroclus with story and advice
804–48	Patroclus returns, treats Eurypylos

Another way to describe the principle governing the use of similes can now be ventured: similes do not occur in the middle of an action; they either draw attention to the start of an action or to its finish. Put another way, similes are not like freeze frames or slow-motion sequences in film, but like transition shots, often accompanied by theme music. To point out that the similes are devices to regulate the flow of narrative is not to deny that they also mark emotional peaks; it happens that, as in most dramatic narratives, these two, the episodic boundary and the emotional peak, occur together. The underlying principle, in its respect for the integrity of the narrated episode, might be compared with what has been called Zielinski's Law, the tendency for Homeric epic to present, as sequential, events that are actually imagined as happening simultaneously.²² Both the placing of similes at boundaries and the narrating of simultaneous events as if they were consecutive work to focus the audience on one event as they propel the narrative forward.

I am not suggesting that the similes came first and Greek epic poets built a narrative around them, although techniques of this kind are not unheard of in oral art: Harold Scheub's book on the Xhosa *ntsomi* shows how the technique of "core-images" allows experienced women who narrate this genre to compose in performance.²³ A closer poetic parallel to the combined rhythmic/thematic function of similes in narrative might be the function of the chorus in Athenian drama. If we go somewhat farther afield, however, it turns out that there are even more relevant comparanda to this episode-framing function of the simile. The comparative material I shall cite comes from a wide range of cultures, but from specifically *heroic* traditions within each culture, thus from traditions parallel in content to the Greek epic. In each of the traditions, which I shall survey briefly at this point, episodic boundaries and emotional peaks are emphasized, and this is done by a shift in performance mode, either from prose to verse, from chant to melodic song, or from one type of song to another. In a number of cases, the songs are the locus for simile and metaphor, though this is not obligatory in all the traditions that I shall mention. The main point is that we must recognize in living oral performances the feature of performance shifts and layerings: rarely if ever is a performance "text" uniform in its texture. My argument is that these shifts are functionally akin to the rhythmic function played by similes in Homer.

²² On this phenomenon, see esp. Krischer 1971, 91–121.

²³ Scheub 1975.

Within the past decade or so, we have gained from folklorists and anthropologists excellent transcriptions of complex oral performances. For instance, in her book *Dried Millet Breaking*, Ruth Stone shows how in the highly interactive Woi epic of the Kpelle people of Liberia three levels of performance exist simultaneously.²⁴ First, there is epic framing, in which metatextual comments are made by the performer, either casual asides to the audience (“my kneecaps are hurting”) or stylized phrases. An example of the latter category are the formulaic calls by the performer to his chorus and to the designated audience member who is “answer-giver.”²⁵ With a very demanding audience, interested in “vividness” and “trustworthiness,” the metatextual can include such exchanges as that which occurs after a rather strange episode—when the hero rubs newly-forged iron on his buttocks and flies off. The designated audience spokesman asks, “Were you there?” to which the narrator answers, “Very near.”²⁶ Sometimes this sort of exchange is actually built into the next performance level, the story-telling that takes place in normal prose: the audience/questioner will say, “Don’t lie to me” to which the narrator might report the speech of the hero by way of proof.

These first two levels are, of course, completely absent from our Homeric texts. The third level of performance in the Woi epic is that of song produced by the narrator. In Stone’s words, “Here we find the most esoteric and abstract ideas. Proverbial phrases and formulas, some that are found in other Kpelle music, lace this text.” She goes on to observe that, in the tunes, sung by the narrator and then repeated by a chorus, the narrator “inserts the heart and soul of the epic, the proverbs and other nuggets of ‘deep’ Kpelle.”²⁷

In the Woi epic, one item regularly associated with song is proverbs: these play a generalizing role, placing the situation in terms of larger cultural entities, while also highly developed in terms of set diction and useful in placing characters in relation to one another. A sung phrase like “the large large rooster, the hen’s voice is sweet, the rooster crows the dawn” emphasizes the paradox of a lesser character trying to outdo a superior, while it also restates a general cultural maxim.²⁸ Although these are not similes, it has been remarked by many that similes in Homer perform just such functions as generalizing experience and incorporating acknowledged cultural views

²⁴ Stone 1988, 12–61.

²⁵ Stone 1988, 13.

²⁶ Stone 1988, 27.

²⁷ Stone 1988, 12–13.

²⁸ Stone 1988, 21.

of both the civilized and natural worlds. Less often noticed about Homeric similes is their frequent concentration on the *sound* of an action (e.g., *Iliad* 3.1–9), another performance feature over and above the rhythmic that the Woi epic brings to light.²⁹

Turning to other cultures in Africa, we can note that Igbo epic performance features four distinct and shifting styles: (1) narrative in ordinary voice; (2) three kinds of lyric song, used respectively to comment on emotional states of characters, make appeals to a hero as if he were present, and give a hero's own lyrical outburst at peak moments; (3) invocative style to declaim hero lists and praise epithets; and (4) oratorical style, in the singer's own voice, giving the audience moralizing or prophetic advice.³⁰ Once again, I do not claim that similes are found exclusively in one of these voices, but rather that the epic shows *functionally conditioned performance shifts*. The Igbo tradition has formalized and made distinctive in performance a pragmatic feature that has caused considerable discussion in Homeric studies, the direct address of characters in the poems.³¹

For epic in Central Asia, we are lucky to have Karl Reichl's recent guide to Turkic oral poetry, giving us an expert collection of techniques and tales. From his rich material, I select just one: the use of verse in the *Book of Dede Qorqut* to contrast with the usual epic prose.³² One function of the verse is in "catalogue of beauty" passages. "My wife with the body of a cypress, my wife with joining eyebrows like a drawn bow—with red cheeks which are like autumn apples" runs one that continues in this lyrical mode to make a number of other comparisons. Praise and lament are done in a similar style, also in verse. Here we have not only a contrastive device (verse vs. prose) to highlight peaks in the narrative; in addition, we see how the tradition, dating back to the thirteenth century, also employs similes in lyric portions.

In Sumatra, Nigel Phillips has recorded performances of *sijobang*, the singing of a narrative about the hero Anggun Nan Tungga, which can be performed either by soloists with musical accompaniment or by dramatic troupes of fifteen to twenty male actors who mime the story as the narrator

²⁹ Often the song features onomatopoeic portions as a rhythmic device, and these are most subject to contemporary influences: at one point in the story, the narrator imitates an airplane noise while describing how Woi's house will go up into the sky. An onomatopoeic formula for ending episodes is the singer's "Dried millet" *wese* (sound of breaking), and the chorus response, "Wese."

³⁰ Azuonye 1990, 53–60.

³¹ Martin 1989, 234–36.

³² Reichl 1992, 47–49.

sings.³³ *Sijobang* features a prose story-line that is framed and interrupted by a verse form called *pantun*, in which the singer can introduce comic touches, refer to love stories, or even talk about audience members. In the metaphorical system of the performers, these verse segments are known as “flowers” and the song is said to blossom most fully in certain social situations (e.g., when the audience is not well known to the performer, thus allowing him to expatiate on topics otherwise prohibited). Not only do *pantun* verses have a rhythmic function, punctuating episodes; they play the role of meta-performance comment, of deixis pointing to the *hic et nunc* of the song’s production. Interestingly, it is in these “flowers” of song-segments that one also finds similes, as occurs in Phillips’ transcript B: “I tried to tell it but I could not, it is like felling a *sampie* tree ... I tried to stop you but I could not, it is like stopping water flowing downstream: what is the good of suffering?”³⁴ Admittedly, there is nothing as detailed or as rich in narrative elements as the Homeric simile here, but the *sijobang* similes, like the Homeric, can be readily extended in length, mainly through the use of parallelism.

My final examples are from Southeast Asia. Even greater varieties of textural elaboration occur here in traditions I have sampled. In the Tamil performances of the Palavecamcervaikkarar story, Stuart Blackburn identifies no fewer than five musical and song styles above and beyond the ordinary speech style that is used to represent the narrative line.³⁵ A first style is reserved for marking dramatic tension at births, marriages, and deaths in the story; a second performance marker, involving the addition of a particle “e” to key words, is used for most crucial events.³⁶ A third marker consists of audience ululation at certain moments. Again, there is an extra-epic dimension to this stylistic variation: the same behavior occurs ritually at births and marriages, yet it is not reserved for these events in the epic performance. Finally, two musical and rhythmic effects exclusively mark such events as the imminent death of the hero. I will return shortly to the analogue within Greek epic for the sort of genre-embedding evident in the Tamil tradition.

Let me conclude this rough survey by singling out the work of Susan Wadley, who set out to find the significance of performance shifts within the North Indian *Dhola* epic. She shows, first, that scenes or episodes are

³³ Phillips 1981, 1–6.

³⁴ Phillips 1981, 116 (transcript B lines 428–34).

³⁵ Blackburn 1986.

³⁶ The existence of such performance-discourse particles is perhaps not irrelevant to the problems of augmented verbs in Homeric and Vedic narrative.

demarcated by “verbal strategies that involve the use or nonuse of music”—that is to say, one cannot disentangle text from performance in this tradition.³⁷ One of these strategies, called *dhola dhar* is a long song run used for ending episodes. It can be filled with simile: “When destruction comes to man, first lightning falls on the brain, one’s own mother is like a lion, and father seems like Yamraj [the god of death].”³⁸ Using speech-act terms, Wadley differentiates informing talk (the prose narrative) from situating talk—the song-sections, of which she finds at least six styles. These, in turn, are associated with song genres, often employing similes. For instance, the *alha* section—“and he rose immediately from his room, think of a lion moving in the forest, as he went his boots thumped loudly and his shield clanked on his shoulder”—is done in a performance style associated by its tune and rhythm with martial epic, but embedded here in the larger narrative text to create characterization. From her fieldwork Wadley concludes, “... in Indian epic singing, the moods and characters of events and persona are conveyed by changing voices and situations through shifts in song genres.” Narrative, and especially character development, is achieved “through the conscious choice of symbolically-charged melodies, textures, and rhythms borrowed from the regional pool of genres.”³⁹

It is time now to take the comparative evidence and make a hypothesis that can be tested in terms of Greek poetry. Given that similes in Homer have a rhythmic performance function, and that this function is filled by song or other genre shifts in *actual* oral epic, we should allow for the possibility that similes develop from or are related to a separate performance style within Greek. From the comparative and typological viewpoint, similes in fact belong with the elevated “song” portions of performance, while the narrative functions like the lower-register, explanatory “prose” sections of performance.

Having suggested this possibility of a distinct genre origin for similes on the basis of typology, I note now that a supporting argument is available from a completely independent study of Homeric language.

Starting with work published in 1953, and more fully in the second edition of his *Studies in the Language of Homer*, G. P. Shipp found that linguistic features that had independently been established by Pierre Chantraine as “late” developments appear in similes in a much greater

³⁷ Wadley 1991, 201.

³⁸ Wadley 1991, 220.

³⁹ Wadley 1991, 217.

proportion than in the rest of Homer's text.⁴⁰ More than half the similes include late forms, according to Shipp. The implications of his finding have been taken two ways: Shipp himself thought that this meant similes were either composed later than the narrative of the poems or interpolated.⁴¹ Meanwhile, T. B. L. Webster and Geoffrey Kirk saved the integrity of the poems by assuming that the monumental composition of the epics was as late as the time of the composition of the similes. Of course, "late" is a relative term in this discussion; no absolute dating is possible.⁴²

Logically, the "lateness" of the similes could be interpreted on the surface as a simple reflection of the performer's situation. Those portions that one can imagine must change from year to year or even one performance to the next—the asides, digressions, and similes—since they refer to the "real" world of the audience, are more likely to be in less standardized, "later" language of a form more contemporary with the poet. Hainsworth puts it this way: "It is certainly the case that contemporary language was freely admitted to the less traditional parts of the diction, such as similes, comments by the poet, and anecdotes."⁴³ There is, however, more complication to be considered. The rediscovery of the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, for one thing, has helped us remember that there is really no such thing as unmediated "natural" language in texts.⁴⁴ The same might be said *a fortiori* for traditional performance media. If indeed the language of similes was simply an example of a poet's contemporary, later Ionic dialect intruding on a poem expressed in an earlier, delimited *Kunstsprache*, we would have no problem agreeing with those who see in the "late" similes a simple sign of recent composition. As it is, however, the similes contain features *not* to be identified with any one dialect and, moreover, some that are definitely *not* Ionic as we know it.

To test my hypothesis, let us make use of Shipp's extensive analysis, in which he matched items throughout Chantraine's grammar to their occurrence in specific Homeric narrative segments. My analysis of this material compares the "late" and rare items that Shipp found in similes with the other surviving Greek song traditions, especially those of Pindar's choral lyric and of Theognidean elegy. We can conclude that there is a relation between the

⁴⁰ Shipp 1972, esp. 208–22.

⁴¹ Shipp 1972, 215–18.

⁴² Webster 1964, 223–38; Kirk 1965, 144.

⁴³ Hainsworth 1989, 22.

⁴⁴ Bakhtin 1981.

sub-genre of similes, on the one hand, and the genres of lyric performance, on the other. Notice that the correlation of many of Shipp's "late" features with Pindaric choral art tells against the simple solution of making similes "contemporary" Ionic, because Pindar's quite specialized medium is almost exclusively Doric and Aeolic in its makeup.⁴⁵

In what follows, I have listed more than a dozen places, hitherto unremarked, where Pindar and/or Theognis and Hesiod use the "late" features that Shipp and critics before him found problematic in Homeric similes. A full-scale analysis would no doubt produce many more. These examples will suffice to show the range of phenomena involved in the correlation.

- At the least complex level, that of morphology, we can see that a word for "milk" takes an unusual form only once, in a repeated simile. The other Homeric instances of the word show a *t*-suffix (cf. *Odyssey* 4.88, 9.246), as does the Latin cognate *lac*, *lact-is*. But in the simile there appears the nominative of a neuter-*s*-stem (*Iliad* 2.471 = 16.643):⁴⁶

In spring when milk (*glágos*) moistens the pails

In a Pindaric hyporcheme (fr.106.4 SM) the genitive of this *s*-stem form is incorporated in a longer poetic trope, a priamel, in which goats from Skyros are said to be best for milking.⁴⁷

- Still on the level of morphology, let us look at two words that are apparently later formations competing with earlier forms even within Homeric diction. At *Iliad* 4.424–26 the battle-lines of the Achaeans are compared to relentless waves cresting about the headlands:

On the deep, first, it rises to a crest [*korussetai*] but then
broken on the land it roars greatly, and around the cliffs
curling, it comes to a head [*koruphoutai*] and spits sea spume.

The verb *koruphoutai* stands out as one of a handful of present stems of its kind derived from nominal stems other than *o*-stems.⁴⁸ Pindar uses the same word in the figurative phrase "the farthest point forms a peak [*koruphoutai*]

⁴⁵ On Pindaric dialect, see Forssman 1966.

⁴⁶ On the forms: Shipp 1972, 193 and Risch 1974, 18, 80.

⁴⁷ Mss. C and E have the more common genitive *galaktos*.

⁴⁸ Risch 1974, 330; Shipp 1972, 98.

for kings" (*Olympian* 1.113).⁴⁹ Pindar and Homer also share *korussetai*, a denominative verb of a commoner morphological type that seems to have developed a similar meaning "rise to a crest," but primarily means "put a crest [of a helmet] on," and by extension, "arm."⁵⁰ This latter verb (ultimately from the same root) is used in the same simile at *Iliad* 4.426, where we can read a metaphorical force, and thus perhaps detect a locus of diffusion for the secondary denotation. If *korussetai* means primarily "arms itself" (like a hero—cf. *Iliad* 19.364, 7.206) the application to a wave—which "gets its crest up"—in this line brilliantly elides two aggressive phenomena characterized by high threatening "crests" and destructive encounters with whatever stands in their way. Notice that even though the overt point of comparison within this simile turns on the *frequency* of waves whipped up by Zephyrus and the movement of multiple lines of Greek troops (cf. 423 and 427), the immediately preceding object of the poet's gaze, nevertheless, has been an armed hero, Diomedes, leaping into action with a crash of bronze (420–21) and the simile begins by sounding as if it is meant to elaborate on *this* movement rather than the general troop advance (cf. 422–23 *Hôs d'ot'... ornut'*). Therefore, the choice of *korussetai* to describe the wave is even more apt in context.

We may note, in addition, that the use of the verbal metaphor in the simile does what good poetry always does, recovering the radical vividness of the language itself. For *korussetai* here takes us back to the original metonymy underlying the semantic extension of the verb; that is to say, the etymological sense "put on a helmet" has already been watered down elsewhere in Homeric diction to mean "put on arms" in a more general sense (thus even spears can be "helmeted"—cf. *Iliad* 3.18 *kekoruthmena*). The formulaic quality of expressions with the broader semantic range shows that this is already traditional. But in the simile, the wave/warrior comparison is most exact if we assume the verb means literally "put on a crest" rather than the more extended "arm oneself." In short, the simile (an allegedly "late" feature) seems to preserve an *earlier* state of the language in this case. At the same time, it could be argued that the odd shift in comparison—from what first appears to be a description of Diomedes to a general characterization of waves of troops—occurs because this radical meaning of *korussetai* has by this

⁴⁹ On this interpretation of the line, see Kirkwood 1982, 58. It could be that the metaphor is more striking in Pindar: the horizontal axis—what is farthest—is pictured as a vertical ascent—what stands tall like a mountain.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Iliad* 2.273, 4.495.

time become obscure to poet and audience, though the motif of waves in a martial comparison remains important.

- In the next example of shared diction, we find an adjective meaning “powerful,” with a distinctive formation, used in the simile at *Iliad* 11.119:

rushing, covered with sweat, under attack from the powerful beast
[*krataiou thêros*]

As Shipp points out, the masculine *krataios* is secondary to the inherited *u*-stem adjective *kratus*, having been formed by analogy to the inherited feminine *krataiê*.⁵¹

Pindar used this later-formed masculine in describing Telamon, father of Ajax, who once took Troy (*Nemean* 4.25–26). The Pindar passage shows no sign elsewhere in its context of borrowing a strange word from Homer; this is not allusion.⁵² The most we can say is that Pindar and Homer share diction that is unusual from the Homeric standpoint. Although the masculine *kratus* is not common in Homer, the usual adjective form in epic is *krateros*.

- “Late” or rare features found by Shipp in similes can be detected in the diction of Theognidean poetry as well as Pindaric. For example, the word *smikros* for “little” (instead of the more common *oligos* and *tutthos*) occurs in Homer only in the simile at *Iliad* 17.755–57:⁵³

As a cloud of starlings or daws comes
shrieking destruction when they catch sight of a hawk
on its way, that brings the little [*smikrêsi*] birds death ...

The phrase “little bird,” with the non-epic adjective, recurs at Theognis 579–82:

I hate a bad man, and having veiled myself I pass by
with the empty mind of a little bird [*smikrês ornithos*].
And I hate a woman who runs around and a greedy man
who wants to plow someone else’s field.

⁵¹ Shipp 1972, 196. A similar analogical formation and its poetic implications have been analyzed in Nagy 1999b, 349–54.

⁵² Of course, Pindar can on occasion make use of recognizable Homeric phrases for conscious effects: Forssman 1966, 86–100.

⁵³ Shipp 1972, 197.

This intriguing small dialogue seems to use the phrase in question within lines spoken by a female (as the participle shows), with a reply spoken by a male.⁵⁴ The whole exchange has the sound of a traditional insult duel: the exactly structured pair of couplets is formally equivalent to modern-day Cretan *mandinadhes*, which are also used extensively in negotiating male-female relations.⁵⁵ It could be that the word *smikros* for “little” enters epic through a pre-existing lyric tradition that features encounters involving gender clashes. In this connection I observe that in the Homeric simile we are examining, the *kirkos* is masculine, and the little birds (like the first speaker in Theognis), feminine. A further stylization of the lyric *topos* that I am postulating might be the bird-to-bird talk we find in Hesiod’s fable of the hawk and nightingale (*Works and Days* 202–12), where the clash is also along gender lines, but one bird, the nightingale, also clearly represents the poet. Finally, it is not impossible that Pindar, in *Pythian* 3, combines this set of poetic associations (bird = small; female, opposed to male) with the other well-known *topos*, of poet as bird, when he asserts towards the poem’s end (107–9):

I will be little among the little [*smikros en smikrois*], big with the big,
and the divinity ever at my mind I shall honor,
doing service according to my own device.⁵⁶

Of course, I am not claiming that any of the lyric associations of this trope affect the simile in the *Iliad*, but I note that the non-epic adjective does fit comfortably into a *systematic* series of related themes outside epic, another indication perhaps that this is where the generic origin of the diction is to be sought.

- Still on the lexical level, we find several substantives, uncommon in Homeric diction but used in similes, deployed within a more fully articulated set of themes in lyric poetry. The following simile (*Iliad* 15.410–13) contains the

⁵⁴ Commentators on the lines since von Leutsch in 1871 have read them as dialogue: see Garzya 1958, 224; Harrison 1902, 196–97. West 1974, 156 assumes it is one poem, but not a dialogue; van Groningen 1966, 228–30 goes so far as to see two unrelated poems. The emendation by West 1989, 201 (changing the participle to masculine accusative in line 580) destroys the ironic effect that Garzya had detected.

⁵⁵ A good example of such *mandinadha* duelling is analyzed by Herzfeld 1985, 144–46. See also the extensive collection of Droudakis 1982, esp. 123–30.

⁵⁶ On the *topos* of poet as bird, see Gow 1965, 143 on Theocritus *Idylls* 7.47. Note that the *makhana* of Pindar, synonymous with his poetry, is elsewhere styled “winged” (*Pythian* 8.34), and that Pindar can refer to rivals (his or the victor’s) as birds (*Olympian* 2.87).

only occurrence in Homer of the word *sophiê*, “wisdom,” the only abstract noun formation of this type in Homer.⁵⁷

But as a chalk-line makes straight ship’s wood
in the hands of a skilled carpenter, one who knows
all wisdom [*sophiês*] well, by Athena’s suggestions,
Thus was their war and battle made evenly taut.

Pindar uses the word twenty times, and Theognis ten, but most interesting is the further context in Theognis 1003–9:

This virtue, this prize is best among men
and fairest for a wise man [*sophôi*] to bear;
A common good is this, for the *polis* and all the people:
The man who stays firmly standing at the front.
In general for men I shall advise [*hypothêsomai*]: with youth’s
glorious flower he who thinks noble thoughts
should enjoy his own possessions well ...

The speaker’s promised advice to the wise man here comprises an elegiac imperative contrasted with the martial poetic ideal.⁵⁸ The *Iliad* passage in a similar manner mentions the advice of Athena (*hypothêmosunêisin*) alongside the recipient’s own wisdom. But whereas wisdom is only touched on briefly in epic, it is unmistakably a topic appropriate to lyric and epinician advising; poetic direction on how to obtain it constituted a recognizable genre distinct from epic but interacting with that form.⁵⁹

- In the simile at *Iliad* 15.381–84, the word *toikhos*, which elsewhere means “wall of a house,” in Homer, is applied to the sides of a ship that waves are swamping:

As a great wave of the broad-wayed sea
goes down above the ship’s side [*toikhôn*] whenever the force
of the wind drives it on—for that’s what most swells waves—
the Trojans with a great shout went down upon the wall

⁵⁷ Risch 1974, 116.

⁵⁸ Young 1971, 61 sharpens the contrast by placing in quotation marks lines 1003–6 (except *sophôi*), citing Tyrtaeus 9.13ff. and 7.29ff.

⁵⁹ On such *hypothekai* poetry, see Martin 1984a.

This shift from “wall” to “hull” has been thought to represent a later semantic development; in the absence of other attestations we cannot be sure.⁶⁰ I note only that, within this simile, there is a contrast between the ship’s “walls” and the famous Achaean wall (cf. the related word, *teikhos*, at line 384). This is followed by a sort of reification of the simile, as the Trojans pour over the defensive wall and threaten the *actual* Achaean ships: the simile of the waves describes a flood of men, yet the objects of both metaphorical and real inundations are the same. Rather than representing a catachresis of the regular meaning of *toikhos*, I suggest further that the simile at *Iliad* 15.381–84 taps into an independent series of tropes visible in such lyric forms as Theognis’ lines (673–76) on the “ship of state”:

They do not care to bail, and the sea dashes over
 both sides [*toikhôn*]. With difficulty, to be sure,
 is any one saved, such things do they do. They stopped
 the good helmsman, who kept watch knowledgeably.

We could say that these lines are reminiscent of the Homeric simile. But, put the other way, it could be that the simile makes use of an emotionally intense song-moment in which one can lament the total loss of civil order in a *polis*. It is easier to believe that Homeric art redeploys traditional diction (including the nautical meaning of the otherwise unusual *toikhos*) in this way, just as the *Dhola* epic borrows freely from a regional genre pool. At the moment of describing the worst disorder in the Achaean camp, the poet would then be eliciting in his audience all the associations entailed by an allegory of the Theognidean type. The alternative is to think that Theognis borrowed specifically from the one Homeric simile where the word *toikhos* meant ship hulls and developed his own allegory from there. That the elegiac lines embody a carefully elaborated, enigmatic utterance, artful in the extreme, is made clear from lines 681–82, characterizing the verses as an *ainigma*, hidden from all but those of an in-group skilled in poetic wisdom.⁶¹ This sort of characterization applies more to a complex reworking of a traditional extended poetic metaphor than to a random borrowing from Homeric hexameters. If anyone “borrows” here, it is the Homeric composer.

- Sometimes, the least obvious word leads one onto a rich vein of shared diction and motif indicating lyric/epic interaction in similes. The adverb *exaiphnês*

⁶⁰ Chantraine 1968–80, 1099.

⁶¹ See especially Nagy 1985.

“suddenly” is a “late” rarity in a simile that compares fighting to a fire that rises up suddenly (*Iliad* 17.736–39):⁶²

Thus they speedily bore the corpse from the war
to the hollowed ships. But war was tense for them
like a wild fire that starting up suddenly [*exaiphnês*], attacks
and burns a city of men, and houses get ruined.

Pindar (*Olympian* 9.52) uses the same adverb once, precisely in a scene of natural disaster, when speaking of a primordial flood:

They say that water’s strength had flooded the black earth but then,
by Zeus’ devisings,
an ebb-tide suddenly [*exaiphnês*] took the bilge.

The phrase *ormenon exaiphnês*, “starting up suddenly,” occurs in another simile (*Iliad* 21.14), which describes the Trojans fleeing Achilles as locusts flee to a river when they are set aflutter by flames. The contrast is ironic: the river is relief for the locusts, but in this case will be death for the Trojans, and in fact is about to flood the plain, in this poetic rendition of a clash of the elements outside Troy. If we imagine that the primordial flood scene alluded to in Pindar recapitulates some mythic narrative, and does so with a conventional signal (the adverb *exaiphnês*), then we can speculate that the similes about sudden fire key the Homeric audience to similar mythic descriptions of cosmic disaster, over and above the explicit martial conflict in the similes. At any rate, it is worth noting the closeness and specificity of contexts surrounding this seemingly banal adverb.

- A simile at *Iliad* 16.384–88 presents a similarly complex case of intertextual (or, as I now prefer, meta-performative) poetics:

As the whole black earth is pressed hard by a hurricane
on an autumn day, when Zeus pours torrential rain
the time he is angered at men who by violence
render crooked judgements in the agora
and drive out justice,
not respecting the regard of the gods [*theôn opin ouk alegontes*].

Shipp, citing Chantraine, observes that the verb *alegô* takes an accusative rather than the usual genitive object only when used in the simile line *theôn opin ouk alegontes*, “not respecting the regard of the gods.” Meanwhile, it has

⁶² Shipp 1972, 195.

long been seen that this simile resembles a motif in Hesiod (*Works and Days* 248–51):⁶³

O kings, you yourselves take notice of this justice,
for close by, among men, immortals note
how many grind down one another with crooked judgements
not respecting the regard of the gods [*theôn opin ouk alegontes*].

The Homeric simile containing this line thus apparently recasts as an allusion the juridical and theological message of the Hesiodic lines, adding to them the meteorological details of Zeus' wrath, but omitting the reference to kings, while the Hesiodic passage fails to mention the signs of the gods' displeasure. We should not assume borrowing in either direction; both passages partially articulate a larger shared complex of ideas and images.⁶⁴ Even more interesting is Pindar's use of the verb *alegô*, again with the unusual accusative, as he explains his motives for praise (*Olympian* 11.11–15):

Child, Hagesidamos, for your boxing
I shall sing a sweetsung ornament upon your crown of gold olive
respecting the race of the Zephyrian Lokrians [*genean alegôn*].

It is worth noticing that the grand opening priamel of Pindar's poem foregrounds his choice of sweet-sounding hymns by contrasting it with other human needs, specifically for wind and rain—exactly the two cosmic threats in the Homeric simile about Zeus' justice (*Olympian* 11.1–3):

Sometimes men need winds the most, sometimes waters
from the heavens, watery children of cloud.

Pindar's respect for the victor's homeland, embodied in the form of this choral song, will by implication reinforce the cosmic order (*dikê*) so conspicuously absent in the world described by Homer and Hesiod. The choral poet by his song ensures that the injustice imagined in the Iliadic vignette (16.384–92) never happens. The verb *alegô* with its rare accusative object is a dictional peculiarity specifically associated with this theme, a theme embedded, in turn and independently, in the poems of Hesiod, Homer, and Pindar.⁶⁵

⁶³ For recent discussion, see Janko 1992, 365 and Schmidt 1986, 109–10.

⁶⁴ The same phenomenon underlies other Hesiodic lines: see Martin 1984a.

⁶⁵ Against possible objections that such small details cannot evoke such large themes, I offer the evidence gathered from actual fieldwork with living traditional poetics, as summarized by J. M. Foley 1991, 1–60.

The place of Pindaric poetry in these examples needs to be put into perspective. We are really talking about two phenomena. First, there is the diachronic priority that praise poetry of the type represented by Pindar seems to have over epic of the type represented by Homer.⁶⁶ Second, Pindaric art may appear diachronically “older” than Homer because for its own compositional reasons it preserves ideologies either forgotten, suppressed, or barely alluded to by Homeric epic. We have seen one such case in the motif of Zeus’ justice and the flood. Another such topic may have been life after death, on which Pindar has been thought to preserve traces of Orphic ideas.⁶⁷ In that case, it is significant that one proof-text for Pindar’s “Orphic” view of the afterlife contains the adjective *apalamnos* “helpless; hard to deal with” (*Olympian* 2.57). The word appears once in Homer, in a simile at *Iliad* 5.597, describing a traveller who stands helpless before an impassable river. The expected form of the adjective, *apalamos*, is found in Hesiod *Works and Days* 20.⁶⁸ Shipp’s comment on the word is worth quoting, as it reveals much about his assumptions: “As *apalamnos* and also *palamnaios* are common in early poetry including Doric and tragedy, it is more likely that the simile has the word from such a source than that it has an epic origin.” He therefore imagines a very late stage of composition for this simile, because it contains a word found otherwise in later poetry.⁶⁹ But if we take into account the way in which living oral poetic traditions function, we can reformulate the solution without recourse to problematic late datings and interpolations: given its context in Pindar, it is likely that the word comes from another genre of poetry, of the Orphic-hymnic type. Part of that tradition made its way down into the work of Pindar and other lyric poets, while Homeric poetry independently made contact with Orphic themes and diction.⁷⁰

In this case and in others, of course, it is not the actual words of the fifth-century Boeotian poet, but the art of his lyric forebearers that has been deployed by the epic composer. Most of that earlier lyric tradition is lost to us. When we do have it, interesting questions of mutual shared themes and diction arise. A centerpiece for the investigation must remain two similar passages about the effects of midsummer, Hesiod *Works and Days* 582–88

⁶⁶ Nagy 1990 offers persuasive metrical and dictional details to support this argument. To my knowledge, his account has not been challenged.

⁶⁷ West 1983, 110.

⁶⁸ Risch 1974, 54.

⁶⁹ Shipp 1972, 245.

⁷⁰ West 1983, 120 notes points of contact with regard to theogonic material.

and Alcaeus fragment 347 LP. Recently, J. C. B. Petropoulos has convincingly explicated the link between these in terms of their recasting of functional, local song traditions still attested in modern rural Greece. The two passages, long considered in standard literary terms as the result of “borrowing” by one poet of another’s work, “may well be independent manifestations derived from the same stock of thematic material,” Petropoulos concludes.⁷¹

I want to extend this finding in terms of Homeric poetry and the relationship that I have been outlining between lyric traditions and similes. The well-known passage describing the Trojan elders on the walls of their city compares them to cicadas (*Iliad* 3.150–52):

γήραϊ δὴ πολέμοιο πεπαυμένοι, ἀλλ’ ἀγορηταὶ
ἐσθλοί, τεττίγεσσιν ἐοικότες οἳ τε καθ’ ὕλην
δενδρέῳ ἐφεζόμενοι ὅπα λειριόεσσιν ἰεῖσι

Stopped from warring by old age, but talkers,
good ones, like cicadas which in the wood
sitting on a tree emit a slender voice.

The late feature noted by Chantraine and Shipp is at line 152: *dendreōi ephezomenoi* has a rare synizesis reflecting the loss of an original intervocalic digamma (**dendrewōi*).⁷² Shipp believes the synizesis is produced under pressure from an Attic form *dendros* (dative *dendrōi*), which is itself a reinterpretation back-formed from the plural *dendrea*, by analogy. If the Homeric simile, as well as the Hesiodic scene (which has the same phrase, at *Works and Days* 583), compress a traditional poetic motif that is expanded in the Alcaeus song, the traditional *type* represented by Alcaeus 347 could be the source for the hexameter treatments. Furthermore, if the phrase *dendreōi ephezomenoi* was originally in a different generic context, it may not have been metrically intractable—as it appears to be in Homer and Hesiod.⁷³ I leave for another time further exploration of the thematic implications of *Iliad* 3.150–52 in the light of the passage’s apparent relationship to traditional lyric motifs.

⁷¹ Petropoulos 1994, 82. For different comparative evidence tending towards the same conclusion concerning Hesiodic poetry, see Martin 1992a.

⁷² Shipp 1972, 12. Kirk (1985b, 284) accepts the linguistic lateness of the feature but attributes it to “the most developed phase of the language of oral epic; that is, it is likely to be by Homer himself.”

⁷³ An older phrase without synizesis, **dendrewōi ephezomenos*, would form a choriambic dimeter, the lyric meter attested in, for example, Anacreon 349 PMG.

- Following up the notion that lyric forms may have affected the diction of similes, we might attribute some other metrical irregularities within Homeric verse to the differing demands of lyric meter; seemingly aberrant diction may have been precut to fit another mold. This seems to be the case in *Iliad* 23.226–28:

When the Dawnstar [*Heôsphoros*] goes to utter light upon the earth
after whom saffron-robed Dawn spreads over the sea
then the fire was dying down and the flame stopped.

Shipp notices the harsh synizesis in the initial syllable of the word for Dawnstar, *Heôsphoros*.⁷⁴ We can add that a similar synizesis must occur at Pindar *Isthmian* 4.24 (also a simile):⁷⁵

But, awakened, has a sheen on its skin
like the wondrous Dawnstar [*<Ao>sphoros*] among other stars.

The Pindaric form might, in fact, be restored as *Asphoros*, a form featuring the expected West Greek contraction instead of synizesis.⁷⁶ In sum, the poet of *Iliad* 23.226 uses this word metrically as if it had its Doric contracted form and may do so under the influence of local western Greek non-epic lyric.

- Finally, a similar argument might help us explain at least one “acephalic” line, which occurs in a simile at *Iliad* 9.4–7:

As two winds stir up the fish-filled sea,
Boreas and Zephyrus, which blow from Thrace
coming on suddenly, and the black wave gathers
in a crest, and spreads much seaweed alongside the sea.

The short initial vowel of *Boreês* causes the irregularity.⁷⁷ As it happens, we have in Pindar a context in which these two wind names are fitted with other dictional elements in such a way that the syllables retain their natural quantity (*Parthenia* 2 [fr. 94b Sn-M] 16–18):

κεῖνον, ὃς Ζεφύρου τε σιγάξει πνοᾶς
αἰψηράς, ὅπῳταν τε χεῖμῶνος σθένει

⁷⁴ Shipp 1972, 9.

⁷⁵ *<Ao>σφόρος* with synizesis is Bergk's emendation (έωσ–, άωσ–, codd.), necessary for meter.

⁷⁶ This was suggested in a note by Bury 1892, 68, although he prints Bergk's emendation in the text.

⁷⁷ Leaf 1900, 372 notes that one class of mss. reads Attic *Borras* here.

φρίσσων βορέας ἐπι-
σπέρχῃσ' ...

That one, that calms the quick winds of Zephyr
and when Boreas bristling with storm's strength rushes ...

If Homeric poetry is here assimilating a non-hexameter poetic motif, one perhaps appropriate to seasonal or hymnic material, then it acquires along with the motif the diction and meter of the source tradition. In this connection, then, it is a pleasant surprise to find in the same Pindar passage another peculiarity of the language of Homeric similes, namely the unusual deployment (from a Homeric standpoint) of a compound of *sperkhô* in the active, rather than middle form, used intransitively to mean “rush.”⁷⁸

In sum: starting from the internal evidence of the rhythmic punctuation provided by similes within the *Iliad*, we then find by comparison that this corresponds *functionally* to that of distinctive song-genres in the performance of epics in a number of cultures. Returning to non-epic song-texts from ancient Greek tradition, we further find a number of *formal* congruences between similes and lyric poetry, at the level of diction and even meter. An analogy to the process would be the way that Homeric speeches stylize elements of actual “sociopoetic” performance genres.⁷⁹ As with those embedded speech-acts, the “lyric” similes are “sub-genres” only if we take the viewpoint of the all-encompassing Homeric performer; but we know that even as late as the fifth century a poet like Pindar, as Gregory Nagy has elegantly shown, can hold a quite different view about the priority and value of Homeric art.⁸⁰

We shall probably never know whether similes were ever perceived by an ancient audience as having a different performance register. But one thing this investigation of Homeric epic can tell us: once more, the genius of this ambitious super-genre appears to be its inclusion of every other form of song-making. Like the art of the *Hymn to Apollo's* Delian maidens, which they learned from the man of Chios, it is polyphonic and therefore marvelous.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Shipp 1972, 199; cf. *Iliad* 13.334.

⁷⁹ Martin 1989, *passim*.

⁸⁰ Nagy 1990, 199–214, 414–37.

⁸¹ Nagy 1990, 375–81 on the multiple personifications involved in *Hymn to Apollo* 156–68. For intensive analysis and new interpretation, see now Peponi 2009.

FORMULAS AND SPEECHES

THE USEFULNESS OF PARRY'S METHOD¹

In the entire output of his writing on the art and craft of Homeric verse-making, Milman Parry never alluded to what seems a crucial difference in the epics: the distinction between the poet's narrative and the speeches attributed to characters in that narrative. It seems this should matter: if more than half the lines in Homer are the direct speech of mortals and gods, either these *are* formulaic in some sense, or they are not. If they *are*, it can hardly be that they are composed solely of the type of noun-epithet formula to which Parry, in *The Traditional Epithet in Homer*, devoted most of his discussion.² On the other hand, if they are not formulaic, doesn't this place a serious stumbling block in the way of the notion that Homeric epic verse was the medium of oral performance? Can it be that Homeric speeches might betray the *non*-oral composition of the poems? Are formulas the preserve of tradition, and speeches the space for spontaneity in this art form? Should we give up trying to construct a poetics different from that applied to written verse?

I will argue that this is not the case: when gods or mortals speak in Homer, the diction is as formulaic as that of the narrative segments of the poems. But, beyond this reassuring fact, certain other conclusions can be drawn when we look at the *ways* in which speeches are formulaic. Here, Milman Parry's methods of analyzing Homeric diction, with some important extensions, can lead us to new insights about much larger compositional issues, such as the construction of scenes and the development of characterization. I hope to offer several such insights during the course of explicating

¹ Originally published in *Hommage à Milman Parry: le style formulaire de l'épopée homérique et la théorie de l'oralité poétique*, ed. F. Létoublon (originally Amsterdam: Gieben, now Leiden: Brill, 1997), 263–73.

² Translated in Parry 1971, 1–190.

one portion of a speech from the *Odyssey*. Although these arise from a straightforward application of the study of formulas, I have not found any of the points I shall make in *Odyssey* commentaries, including the recent joint enterprise of Heubeck and others.³ Therefore, I am encouraged to think that there is still much work to be done by those who take Parry's scholarship seriously. The workings of formulas in speeches are still largely unexplored, although Parry 65 years ago pointed the way, perhaps without himself realizing it.

We are all familiar with the progress of the argument in Parry's thesis: the extension and economy of formulaic expressions—not merely the fact of their repetition—meant for Parry that Homeric diction represented a medium that could not have been developed by any single poet and was therefore traditional. We know, too, that the linkage between traditional verse and oral composition was made by Parry later on, and does not affect his demonstrations in *The Traditional Epithet*.⁴ But what seems not to have been realized, judging from recent criticism, is that Parry *by no means* restricted the idea of formula in the way that his most cited definition would indicate.⁵ His definition, the “expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea” certainly describes the sort of phrases he studied in detail: the series of adjectives connected with the proper names of heroes, which showed economy and extension in the most-needed places, especially the nominative case.⁶ Yet, when we re-read the early portions of *The Traditional Epithet*, it is clear that Parry focused on noun-epithet formulas after considering a number of other possibilities, all of which he thought too complex to be capable of demonstrating economical use.⁷ In fact, he uses the word “formula” to describe the combination of pronoun, particle, and noun, conjunction, and verb, and several other patterns.⁸ Only in the case of preposition and proper noun did he go beyond the combination of noun and epithet, but not because he thought only these were true formulas: rather, as he put it, “outside of noun-epithet formulae and epithets of heroes we are compelled to forgo quantitative analysis” (*Traditional Epithet* 105).

³ Heubeck et al. 1988–92.

⁴ For a recent restatement of these key points, see Lord 1991, 73–103.

⁵ Typical of the misunderstandings on this point is Shive 1987; see the review by Nagy 1988.

⁶ Parry 1971, 13.

⁷ Parry acknowledges the limitations imposed by his choice of data at Parry 1971, 20–21.

⁸ See for example the discussion at Parry 1971, 16.

This focus on quantitative analysis made *The Traditional Epithet* such a powerful work. Its wider connections with the positivist trends in intellectual life in the early 20th century, and in the history of Classical Philology, are worth investigating. Unfortunately, the urge to quantify the so-called “formulaic content” of poems and then use this as a litmus test of “oral composition” came to distract a number of subsequent investigators. We are, thankfully, through with that era in which the very possibility of interpreting Homeric poetry was thought by some to be threatened by Parry’s work. But we face a different threat nowadays, from those who dismiss Parry’s discoveries as ultimately irrelevant to the interpretation of the poetry. What do we have to offer those who believe that the true genius of Homer, the alleged individual creativity of a great poet, lies in those elements of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which cannot be easily labeled formulaic? In other words, those who notice formulas in Homer only to be able to rescue the poet from their clutches? The devotee of traditional poetry would like to assert that the poetry is precisely in the formulas, and furthermore that the formulas are everywhere, even in those portions of the poems that might seem at first sight most spontaneous and “untraditional,” the speeches. But to do this we must return to that labyrinth of formulas outside the pale of the noun-epithets, the realm that Parry skirted as being unquantifiable.

If we begin at the level of the passage, rather than the level of the individual phrase, the task of finding what is in some way “formulaic” might appear less hopeless. The beauty of Milman Parry’s method, overall, is that it takes everything into account and refuses to discard evidence. This same ideal should guide us in determining what is formulaic in speeches. This is to say that we need a close word-by-word analysis of as many Homeric speeches as one can examine. But in conjunction with such an undertaking, we need to have at least a tentative notion of how far the term “formula” can be extended. Professor Hainsworth, in his recently published *Iliad* commentary, observes that consensus has still not been reached on the definition of formula. He proceeds to list seventeen phenomena that a formula definition should take into account. These include the fact that certain words and word-shapes have a preferred location in the verse; that phrases recur, which often conform to the cola of the verse; that sentences are patterned in specific ways; that phrases agglomerate; and that phrases become obsolete, and are replaced by others.⁹

⁹ Hainsworth 1993, 1–5.

At this point we should perhaps ask: if a definition of the formula could be made that would include such phenomena, what would we do with it? How could it aid interpretation of the poetry? Or should it be thought of as an end in itself? It is clear that one's definition of the formula depends ultimately on what it is to be used for. When counting formulas to prove orality, a clear rule—say, a phrase repeated once in the same metrical position—will do. But once we move beyond raw statistics, a more flexible instrument is needed. Hainsworth himself has given us the most flexible definition so far, stemming from his detailed studies over the past twenty-five years: as he puts it in the introduction to his *Iliad* commentary, “A formula is a group of two or more words that are associated with each other.”¹⁰ However, this definition can still not immediately account for such things as the tendency of certain words to prefer one location in the line. I would like to suggest an addition to this formulation. My addition is ultimately inspired by Parry's observation that conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, and even particles are used in recognizable but hard to quantify patterns within Homer. The unified field theory that I am proposing was sketched out in my book, *The Language of Heroes*, several years ago, but I now take the opportunity of offering to a critical audience a refined version, together with my thoughts on how this unified field theory of the formula can be employed in interpretation.¹¹

I believe that we can account for almost all the aspects of dictional behavior in Homer by taking a structural linguistic view of the formula. In this view, the formula can be seen as consisting of two levels: we can call them the syntagmatic and paradigmatic. Or, to use Roman Jakobson's terms, the formula, like language, comprises an axis of selection and an axis of combination.¹²

By the syntagmatic I mean essentially what Hainsworth calls the formula: two or more words associated with each other. At the most rigid level, these are the phrases upon which Parry concentrated, phrases that the poet can employ with confidence to fill out a number of metrically different verses: such things as *dios Odusseus* and *podas ôkus Achilles*. Hainsworth's path-breaking book on the flexible formula has shown how these can be separated, inverted, inflected, expanded, and collapsed, and how similar manipulations apply to common nouns as well.¹³ The key aspect of the syntagmatic formula

¹⁰ Hainsworth 1993, 18.

¹¹ Martin 1989, 162–70.

¹² See the influential conference paper Jakobson 1960.

¹³ Hainsworth 1968.

is that there are at least two words to be considered: usually in proximity, usually noun and adjective or verb and adverb.

Paradigmatic formulas can be explained with reference to the metrical structure of the line. It is well known that the noun-epithet formulas match up with the breaks between cola in the hexameter. Without approaching the question of priority, whether the phrase or rhythm came “first,” I can say, however, that this one fact, i.e., that syntagmatic formulas and the cola are so often identical in shape, militates against the notion recently proposed by Edzard Visser, which would have it that the poet composes on the basis of *single words* of appropriate metrical shapes.¹⁴ If single words alone lie at the heart of the compositional technique, there is absolutely no reason for the colon breaks to have ever developed in the first place in their attested positions or to have been preserved. But the focus on single words *can* be useful. For instance, if we look more closely at the hexameter, it can also be conceived as a series of metrical slots, smaller than cola, but larger than the dactyl/spondee foot, ready to accommodate words of one to five or six syllables. Eugene O'Neill, Jr. drew attention to the tendency of certain metrical word-shapes to come at certain positions in the verse: an unusual thing, if we consider the range of possible places into which words could theoretically fit into the verse. As you recall, O'Neill shows that word-types are not spread evenly in all the possible places. “Localization” instead takes place.¹⁵ But we can go further than this and notice that not only certain word shapes, but certain lexical items appear regularly only in a few places in the line. When a single word, be it noun, verb, conjunction, or particle, occurs by itself, regularly in a particular slot in the line, I call this a “paradigmatic formula.” To put this another way, in terms of composition: whenever the poet composes a line, he can rely on not one but two types of knowledge to complete the verse: 1) what phrases fit which cola (“syntagmatic formulas”) but also, even more important when we come to talk about speeches, 2) what single words can regularly come at what point in the verse.

Under the heading of paradigmatic formulas, we can account for other phenomena: for example, where similar sounds or similar syntactic patterns or even morphemes crop up at the same points in different lines. Two well-known attempts to describe these phenomena are those by Joseph Russo,

¹⁴ Visser 1988. Nagy has convincingly explained the development of the hexameter from shorter lyric meters, and traced the enormous implications of this fact, first in Nagy 1974, with expansions in Nagy 1990.

¹⁵ O'Neill 1942.

regarding the “structural formula,” and by Michael Nagler, who argued for the role of a “pre-verbal Gestalt” underlying the surface diction.¹⁶ My notion of paradigmatic formulas differs from the earlier descriptions, however, because I wish to restrict the definition of paradigmatic formula to mean only the appearance of the same *word* in the same metrical slot (allowing for inflection), rather than a word-shape or morphological type. My idea of paradigmatic formula will cover Visser’s single-word theory, as well, and bring it into line with these other earlier attempts. It is important to point out, however, that neither the paradigmatic nor syntagmatic type alone can be taken as defining the formula: both are needed and must be understood as interacting.

Some paradigmatic formulas, in fact, come from the ossification of syntagmatic formulas, which lock words into particular slots because they must accommodate entire phrases. A number of these lexical items reappearing in particular slots do so because they reflect the syntax of the language. As far as one can tell, the unmarked Indo-European sentence had subject + object + verb word-order, so that in the Homeric line it is natural that the verb so often comes at the end of the verse when the verse is equivalent to a whole sentence. Another tendency within Indo-European syntax, so-called Wackernagel’s Law, accounts for the appearance of particle strings near the front of the verse, since enclitic and unemphatic pronouns and particles came second in the Indo-European sentence.¹⁷

Prepared with this unified field theory of the formula, we can finally look at a speech to see what its formulaic background can teach us. Let us begin with *Odyssey* 2.40–54. Using the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae CD-ROM text of Homer, and an Ibycus searching program to look at every word and collocation, and compare with contexts elsewhere in the poem, I was able to stratify the text as follows:

“ὦ γέρον, οὐχ ἐκὰς οὗτος ἀνὴρ, τάχα δ’ εἶσαι αὐτός, 40
 ὃς λαὸν ἤγειρα μάλιστα δέ μ’ ἄλγος ἰκάνει.
 οὔτε τιν’ ἀγγελίην στρατοῦ ἐκλνον ἐρχομένοιο,
 ἦν χ’ ὕμιν σάφα εἶπω, ὅτε πρότερός γε πνθοίμην,
 οὔτε τι δῆμιον ἄλλο πιφαύσκομαι οὐδ’ ἀγορεύω,
 ἀλλ’ ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος, ὃ μοι κακὰ ἔμπεσεν οἴκω, 45

¹⁶ Russo 1966; Nagler 1974, 1–26. Parry himself, in his use of the term “formula-type,” acknowledged from the start something akin to the structural formula, and in this was followed by Lord and Notopoulos.

¹⁷ See Collinge 1985, 217–19.

δοιά· τὸ μὲν πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἀπώλεσα, ὅς ποτ' ἐν ὕμνῳ
 τοίοδεσσιν βασίλευε, πατήρ δ' ὥς ἥπιος ἦεν
 νῦν δ' αὖ καὶ πολὺ μείζον, ὃ δὴ τάχα οἶκον ἅπαντα
 πάγχυ διαρραΐσει, βίοτον δ' ἀπὸ πάμπαν ὀλέσσει.
 μητέρι μοι μνηστῆρες ἐπέχραον οὐκ ἐθελούση, 50
 τῶν ἀνδρῶν φίλοι υἱες οἱ ἐνθάδε γ' εἰσὶν ἄριστοι,
 οἱ πατρὸς μὲν ἐς οἶκον ἀπεργίγασιν νέεσθαι
 Ἰκαρίου, ὅς κ' αὐτὸς ἐεδνώσαιτο θύγατρα,
 δοίη δ' ὃ κ' ἐθέλοι καὶ οἱ κεχαρισμένος ἔλθοι·

Note that I differ from Parry in that I display differences between *speech* and *narrative* formulas. Those expressions in **boldface italicized type** occur elsewhere in Homer with some regularity in the metrical slot in which they appear here, within speeches (but not exclusively in speeches). They are paradigmatic formulas in speeches. This means that if one has a string of such words, as in line 40 οὔτος ἀνήρ, τάχα, they do *not* occur together with enough regularity to justify calling them a syntagma. οὔτος occurs with ἀνήρ, a few times, but more often a form of this word simply comes in this slot, and the same goes for ἀνήρ, on its own.

The **boldface non-italicized** expressions occur *together* regularly enough for one to claim that this is not accidental. A good example of such a syntagma is line 47 πατήρ δ' ὥς ἥπιος ἦεν.¹⁸ A few times, it is hard to tell whether we are dealing with accidental collisions of paradigmatic formulas, or with real syntagmata that appear in broken-up form (see for example, line 44 πιφαύσκομαι οὐδ' ἄγορεύω, the elements of which occur separately several times in these slots). These ambiguous cases are indicated in wave underlined type here.

Comparing the **boldface non-italicized** (syntagmatic formulas in speeches) with the *plain faced, underlined* (also syntagmatic, but narrative mainly) formulas will show that there are quite few “narrative” formulas, but a good many “speech” formulas, even on this one axis of our definition. This means, from the point of view of characterization, that Telemachus at this point is not sounding like a narrator: he does use a phrase in line 51 (φίλοι υἱες) that occurs only one other time in this form of the plural, but a number of times in the singular (mainly in narrative, to describe persons fallen in battle, in the format “X the dear son of Y”). At line 46, notice that the poet has combined the two categories: πατέρ' ἐσθλόν is usually a narrative

18 Cf. *Iliad* 24.770, *Odyssey* 2.234, 5.12, 15.152.

syntagma; but ἐσθλὸν ἀπώλεσ- comes mostly in speeches.¹⁹ It is interesting further that the most clearly identifiable narrative syntagmata here are those featuring the theme of father and son; this theme, on the macro level, can be thought of as generating the entire *Telemachy*. I will return to another narrative formula, λαὸν ἡγεῖα, later, to see its deeper narrative roots.

One should notice, in looking at the stratified text above, the large amount of boldfaced type. The boldfacing in either Roman or Italic type indicates formulaic expressions found elsewhere in Homer *within speeches*—the distinction Parry did not choose to make. Those phrases that are underlined and *not* boldfaced are formulaic primarily in narrative. The proportion tells us at a glance that most of this speech is formulaic, *in its own genre of speeches*. There is little cross-over from narrative. Thus we can tentatively conclude that we are dealing with not one but two traditions of Homeric verse-making: one for *diegesis*, with a separate but equal one for *mimesis*. Conclusive proof will have to await a jointly undertaken, full-scale analysis of all the speeches in Homer. From my work thus far on both poems, it appears to me that this holds good as a rule for Homeric speeches—they employ a distinct set of formulas, showing the same sorts of ossification and flexibility as the narrative portions of the text.²⁰ The final thing to notice are those words in plain face type that are not underlined, which are not, in any way that I can discover, formulaic. They occur rarely, but in groups, like islands stranded in a sea of formulas. I stress that we can only identify such “islands” by the use of a dual definition of the formula. To switch metaphors for a moment, we might think of the result of our search for paradigmatic and syntagmatic formulas as resembling the weaving of a net: if this heuristic procedure replicates the poet’s compositional technique, it is perhaps not accidental that weaving is one of the oldest Indo-European metaphors for verse-making. By constructing this net or sieve, we can strain out segments that are neither formulaic in the sense of repeated syntagmata or in the sense of repeated single words in a metrical slot. Of course, we should not leap to the conclusion that such portions of the verse are Homer’s unique contribution to the epic. Instead, these non-formulaic portions show us the seams in the construction of the scene, probably indicating where slightly new handling of old poetic themes is being mapped out. The innovation,

¹⁹ *Iliad* 23.280, *Odyssey* 4.724–26, 4.814–16.

²⁰ The apparent results fit well with the comparative evidence from Central Asian and Southeast Asian folk traditions, in which speeches comprise a separate, marked form of discourse within larger epic or dramatic structures, to the extent that they can even form their own *Kunstsprache*, distinct from that of the larger performance medium: details in Martin 1989.

of course, is not necessarily to be attributed to one man called Homer; it could already have occurred at some stage in the preceding generations of performers.

Now that I have isolated formulaic portions of this speech, I would like to illustrate a few of the gains thereby reached for understanding the epic. The test of a formula definition is its usefulness in interpretation. In this passage, we can see that syntagmatic formulas lead us to several larger observations, provided we take time to study all the other scenes in which the syntagmata appear. On the other hand, the paradigmatic formulas help one as a negative influence: they point out areas of possible innovation; then, through study of surrounding expressions, formulas or not, we can discover some of the compositional logic of the scene. This is to say that the syntagmata can be compared directly with other expressions, whereas the paradigmatic expressions do not lead us directly to comparable passages.

Let us return to the expression $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu \eta\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ in line 41. The only other time that the augmented singular aorist is used comes in this same scene, at *Odyssey* 2.28. It happens to occur in the same metrical slot in the question there: $\nu\ddot{\upsilon}\nu \delta\epsilon \tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma \tilde{\omega}\delta' \eta\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$; Telemachus' reply to this question is unusual because it is unmetrical. As Stephanie West observes in her commentary, his line (*Odyssey* 2.41) has an anomalous lengthening of the second syllable in $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu$.²¹ However, she fails to mention the reason for the anomaly. It is clear that the lengthening is caused by displacement of a familiar formula from its usual place at the end of the line, in which the verb appears, unaugmented, six times. The formula is inflected but always has the shape of an adonic: e.g., $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu \acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha\varsigma$ (*Iliad* 2.664, 4.377 etc.).

To sum up at this point: the poet has Telemachus answer a question that was posed with a simple interrogative and verb by using the same verb attached to its formulaically associated noun, $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu$. The tendency in a Homeric answer to mirror the syntax of the question produces here a metrical anomaly. Speeches, which so often respond to previous speeches, are much more complex than narratives in Homer. While in narrative the $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu \acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha\varsigma$ formula sits comfortably at the end of the line, in this speech the speaker must augment the verb to answer the augmented form of the question-verb; but doing so destroys the metrical shape of the syntagmatic formula, turning it into a cretic, which is then obviated by lengthening the final syllable of $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu$.

²¹ Heubeck et al. 1988, 132.

But we can go a step further. The phrase λαὸν ἀγείρας is the embodiment of a typical scene—the mustering of troops—that we can see dramatized many times in the *Iliad*. The mustering has its own array of conventions, as is well known. There is no doubt that the typical scene is traditional at the narrative level. But there is something unusual in the deployment of the formula λαὸν ἀγείρω-. When we examine all the contexts in which this formula occurs, it emerges that the phrase is not always in Homer’s voice, but in fact five out of six times occurs within a speech made by a character, most often by Nestor (four times).²² But even though it is in this environment, we must recognize further that the formula occurs in the character’s retelling of a story from the past: in other words, in a narrative *within* the speech. To take two examples, Nestor at *Iliad* 11.716, recalling his boyhood deeds, says that a messenger came and roused the troops; Agamemnon in *Iliad* 4.377, in provoking Diomedes to fight, recalls that the hero’s father Tydeus went to Mycenae once λαὸν ἀγείρων. This opens up perspectives on a complex of narrative possibilities: in Homer, we have actual dramatization of the typical scene of mustering the troops (for instance, in *Iliad* Books 2 and 4). Second, we have characters who *recall*, using the formula in its line-end form, such typical scenes in the past—this sort of usage is a clear signal, from the native informants, that the scene itself is traditional, for *they* remember it as happening long ago. And there are two further ways of handling this theme.

A passage at *Odyssey* 3.140, again by the master of recollection, Nestor, tells us that after the fall of Troy, an assembly was held and the leaders said “why they assembled the *laoi*” (τοῦ εἵνεκα λαὸν ἄγειραν). Notice that this verse also uses the line-end formula, but is a description of a dramatic moment within the actual type-scene of mustering the troops. We do not need to speculate about whether the “explanation” of why a commander called together troops is or is not part of the type-scene. Investigation shows that it regularly *is* featured this way (e.g., *Iliad* 2.110–41, Agamemnon’s speech). So Nestor’s recollection of a *past* event accords with the way Homer dramatizes the same type of event in *present* time. We have a traditional scene on two levels, in *diegesis* and *mimesis*.

Now, by checking all the syntagmatic formulas involving λαόν and ἄγειρω- forms, and not just the line-end, rigidified formula, but the flexibly used examples as well, we discover that the fourth way of handling the “troop mustering” scene is unique to our passage in Book Two of the *Odyssey*.

²² *Iliad* 2.664, 4.377, 11.716, 11.770, 16.129; *Odyssey* 3.140.

Nowhere else in Homer does a character both explain *why* he gathered the troops *and* use the formula λαόν + ἄγειο-. And yet these two strategies, separated, are well attested, and we should call them traditional. So the construction of the line (*Odyssey* 2.41), in which we have seen a metrical anomaly, is in fact completely sensible and intuitive for a poet pushing the tradition ever so slightly beyond its previous embodiments. Not only does he represent Telemachus explaining himself, but does so having him use the formula used to describe great troop musterings of the past. This sort of hyper-dramatization—making past narrative formulas refer to the immediate dramatic scenario—must finally carry some quantum of characterization for a listening audience. If we consider the effect here, Telemachus, whose own status is ambiguous, impetuously uses an old warrior’s way of talking. I suggest that we see here some true characterization by style.

I will conclude with one example discovered through examining *paradigmatic* formulas. In looking at these one-word items, many times one finds surprising but rather random results. Sometimes, we can make further use of them. Take, for example, line 52, and the phrase οἱ πατρός μὲν ἐς οἶκον. By examining the paradigmatic formulas involved here, we learn, first, that *only* here, out of 121 occurrences of the genitive πατρός in Homer, does it occur in this metrical slot. Our suspicions are heightened by the similarly unique appearance of the particle + preposition μὲν ἐς. Such short words could conceivably come together in the verse almost anywhere. But in fact the combination μὲν ἐς, which is attested seven times altogether, occurs everywhere else in just one position in the line, that ending at the first long of the second foot.²³ This may be a sign that a conventional narrative pattern (contrastive particle + phrase indicating direction) is being remade at this point.

We may notice next that the combination ἐς οἶκον occurs in only two other places, both in the *Odyssey* (14.318 and 17.84), where it is at line-end. This combination could only have arisen after the loss of digamma in οἶκον. The usual way to say “into the house” in Homer is with *postposition* οἶκον ἐς, which avoids the problem of digamma altogether.²⁴ The difference from the usual Homeric usage led Bentley to emend the preposition to πρὸς, but this usage is equally rare in Homer.²⁵ We should keep ἐς οἶκον in the text, while seeking to discover what caused the unusual phrasing, through a consideration

²³ See *Iliad* 5.788, *Odyssey* 1.284, 5.460, 9.72, 15.37, 131.

²⁴ *Odyssey* 5.42, 115; cf. *Odyssey* 7.77.

²⁵ It occurs twice, in a repeated line: *Iliad* 9.147 = 9.289.

of formulaic expressions. Remembering that every phrase develops associations with context through its repeated use in particular situations, we must go about explicating by reviewing all relevant passages in order to establish the contextual register of any given phrase. All these paradigmatic irregularities are symptomatic of larger changes at the levels of theme and scene construction. What has pushed words out of their usual positions here? We may find a clue in the phrase οἶκον ... νέεσθαι, which represents a version of a widely used syntagmatic formula. The full formula is in fact οἰκόνδε νέεσθαι, which is regularly line-final and also features yet another, older way of expressing direction, by means of the accusative of the goal without preposition. Most important is that this fuller, line-final phrase maintains a quite narrow range of associations, centered on the essential theme of return from Troy.²⁶ The traditional nature of this theme is attested in several ways: the existence of an epic sub-genre of *Nostoi*, represented both within the *Odyssey* (the song of Phemius, *Odyssey* 1.326) and in a composition recognized as part of the so-called Cycle. Second, as the work of Douglas Frame has shown, the very concept of *nostos* is so traditional within epic poetry that it has already by Homer developed a nexus of further associations (especially with *noos*) that in turn structure much of the *Odyssey*.²⁷ Finally, there is Calvert Watkins' discovery in Anatolian tradition of the second millennium BCE an instance of the specific theme of return from Troy.²⁸ The theme encapsulated in the phrase οἰκόνδε νέεσθαι thus stands a good chance of being embedded in the oldest stratum of Homeric epic.

When we turn to the passage under consideration, however, we see immediately that this phrase is used in a strikingly different connection. For here reference is made to the suitors who are said to shrink from *going to the house* of Penelope's father, Ikarios, to ask for her in marriage. To an audience familiar with the conventional link between the formula οἰκόνδε νέεσθαι and heroic *nostoi*, this reapplication must seem highly ironic. Further implications affect characterization: either Telemachus at this point is shown to be badly misusing conventional language, or—I think more likely—he is depicted as one who has already the rhetorical skill to deform traditional formulas precisely in order mock his opponents. After all, it is Telemachus who is so fond of hearing heroic *nostoi* that he prevents his mother from halting a poetic rendition thereof at *Odyssey* 1.326–59. Presumably he

²⁶ E.g., *Iliad* 2.290, 354, *Odyssey* 1.17; see *Iliad* 5.716 for a related formula.

²⁷ Frame 1978.

²⁸ Watkins 1986.

knows the language of this sub-genre. To return to the formulaic level: let us note that the innovative use of the syntagmatic formula οἶκόνδε νέεσθαι, which is remade at *Odyssey* 2.52 into ἐξ οἴκον ... νέεσθαι, is highlighted for us by the attendant disruption in paradigmatic positions. This is merely a surface manifestation of the newly pointed use of an ancient theme. A further examination, for which there is no time at the moment, would show that the unique occurrence here of πατρός in this metrical slot is a similar surface marker of a shift on the larger compositional level. For the traditional thematic focus, as far as the *Odyssey* is concerned, must be the house of *one's own* father—a topic that Telemachus addresses in several important speeches. But here the linking of the two nouns, house and father, applies to *Penelope's* family. In short, we can see here yet another level of the poet's narrative craft: the minor change in conventional phraseology, detectable through my proposed formula definition, relates to a shift in a Homeric figure's represented point-of-view. Telemachus speaks of his mother's situation rather than his own; he transfers phrasing normally referring to the speaker's situation (e.g., one's own father) to a third person (her father). The act of imaginative projection by a character adds another dimension to the already rich poetic narrative. We might consider such extensions and re-applications, proceeding from the highest levels of narrative and plot-shaping, to be the true generators of change in Homeric diction. The novelty of a shift in viewpoint, in this case, can be seen through the rips that we have examined in the formulaic texture.²⁹

²⁹ Although almost every modern interpretation of a Homeric passage will assign meaning to repeated diction, analytical studies of the Homeric formula as a pervasive poetic phenomenon have not been frequent since the date of this contribution (originally written for a conference in Grenoble, France, September 1993). Sale 1996 offers a cautious overview of types of formulas (but fails to take into account the proposals of Martin 1989). Bakker 1997 integrates formulaic expressions into a broader study of Homeric speech using Wallace Chafe's approach to narrative discourse. Minchin 2007 extends the comparison with features of natural language usage. Further new perspectives are provided by the essays in Antović and Cánovas 2016.

WRAPPING HOMER UP COHESION, DISCOURSE, AND DEVIATION IN THE *ILIAD*¹

I. Theories and “Texts”

Among the many works of ancient verbal art that might fruitfully yield to intratextual readings, the Homeric epics stand out, not necessarily because they are the most complex (Ovid and Apuleius are far beyond them), but because, unlike later works, their very status as “texts” has always been, and remains, uncertain. Of course, this has only increased, not discouraged, criticism of the poems, so that the number of texts bent on denying textual status to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* takes up ten times the shelf space of the poems:

Homer was poor. His scholars live at ease
making as many Homers as you please.
And every Homer furnishes a book.
Though guests be parasitic on the cook
the moral is: *It is the guest who dines.*
I’ll write a book to prove I wrote these lines.²

Misguided notions of what constitutes *any* text have taken their toll on the criticism of Homer, as they have on Greek lyric.³ In the case of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, moreover, the growing realization that what we read on the page could be anything from a transcript to a distant mimesis of an oral performance has complicated the interpretive task. Then again, too many who

¹ Originally published in *Intratextuality: Greek and Roman Textual Relations*, ed. A. Sharrock and H. Morales (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 43–65.

² Cunningham 1960, 35.

³ For a sensitive critical review of the interpretation of lyric, see Johnson 1982, 4–95.

posed as Homeric literary critics have, in fact, been would-be historians, tangled up in the circular business of settling the “Homeric Question” while simultaneously making judgment calls on what “belongs” in the poems.⁴ The genetic fallacy—that knowing the sources can take the place of interpreting the work—fastened tightly onto Homeric verse. Added to all this, there is the long history of Homer-abuse—what other ancient author, after all, has gained readers with nicknames like *Homêromastix* (Homer-whipper) and *Homêropatês* (Homer-trampler)?⁵ While some critics, from Plato on, labored to save their innocent audiences from the wickedness or absurdity of Homer, others (moderns as well as ancients) tried to save the Poet from himself, in the form of his contradictions, “mistakes,” or the alleged defacements of later versifiers. Both types of corrective effort meant manhandling the text as it was known, whether in the 4th century BCE or the nineteenth century. Allegorizing, athetizing, expurgating, slicing, suturing, willful revision—each has had its day, with the longest spate occupying almost the entire last century, from Lachmann to Wilamowitz.⁶

I do not intend to rehash the story of the critical reception of Homer. Yet it is necessary, before undertaking what I hope is a theoretical and practical advance in reading part of the *Iliad* intra-textually, to map the broad features of contemporary Homeric criticism, not only to spotlight the sort of entrenched positions that still pockmark the landscape and hinder forward movement, but also to inventory methodologies and salvage what remains useful. Basic considerations, concerning which text one uses and which commentaries, also demand this sort of caution. To take one prime example: the most recent text edition of the *Iliad* (and the only electronic edition freely available) has been produced by Helmut van Thiel.⁷ What may escape the notice of inexperienced users is the editor’s underlying ideological position, which has remained unchanged since his earlier work, *Iliaden und Ilias*.⁸ As

⁴ Page (1955b and 1963) embodies this tendency, which has not yet died out: the recent attempt by Powell 1991 to revive Wade-Gery’s implausible speculation correlating the origin of the alphabet and the fixation of the Homeric text similarly bypasses complex poetry in favor of simplified history.

⁵ Applied, respectively, to the grammarian Zoilus (Galen *De methodo medendi* 10:19) and the proto-philosopher Xenophanes (Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Philosophers* 9.18). On modern misuses of Homer, see Morris 1986.

⁶ For a convenient sampling of expurgations (on moral grounds) see Murray 1934, 122–23. On the methods of Aristarchus and Zenodotus, see Nagy 1996b with bibliography. Useful histories of Homeric interpretation: Clarke 1981; Myres 1958; and Adam Parry’s preface in Parry 1971. On the theory of individual songs, see Lachmann 1874.

⁷ Van Thiel 1996.

⁸ Van Thiel 1982, 28–29.

stated there, and reiterated in the prefaces to his editions, van Thiel believes that the Alexandrian critics of Homer did not have access to authentic variants from any sources; rather, all the readings attributed to them in the exegetical tradition are in fact conjectures, on a par with, say, the conjectures of Bentley. Thus, van Thiel feels it necessary to cite them only occasionally in his *apparatus criticus* (while vilifying the much fuller apparatus of T. W. Allen's *editio major*).⁹ In fact, van Thiel claims that a selection of fewer than a dozen "good" manuscripts is sufficient to establish the *Iliad* text.¹⁰ Thus, in the interests of typographical clarity at the bottom of the page, the reader is prevented from considering a number of ancient alternatives to the text as printed.

This may seem like a minor problem, not worth objecting to, were it not that van Thiel (as the title of his earlier book indicates) is one of the last of the Lachmannian *Liederjäger*, convinced that he can find the exact outlines of no fewer than four separate "poems" in the *Iliad* as we have it. Furthermore, van Thiel asserts that the *Iliad* is the product of a massive merging of these pre-existing texts by an "editor" who is one and the same as the "composer."¹¹ Although it is not made explicit in his text of the *Iliad*, the complex system of notations therein referring the reader to "associated" lines is meant to coincide with the editor's earlier work, in which such iterations are interpreted as the traces of unassimilated double treatments of the narrative, the "Frühilias" and "Spätillias" being detectable in this way.

Had he not put forth a widely available edition, van Thiel's work on "*Iliads*" might be treated by contemporary Homerists as a monstrous revenant, its 700 pages devoted to a critical stance thought to have been buried long ago.¹² The stance depends on an aesthetic that refuses to take seriously the techniques of oral poetry, especially repetition in all its forms; the demands of genre and tradition; or the possibilities afforded by multiple

⁹ Van Thiel 1996, vii–ix; cf. Allen 1931.

¹⁰ He would do well to read Housman's Juvenal preface on the subjects of superstition and blind faith in editing: Housman 1961, 53–62. For a balanced view of the edition, see West 1998.

¹¹ See van Thiel 1982, 24–30.

¹² Although another irruption, also massive (879 pages), appeared as recently as 1993: Dawe's translation and "analysis" of the *Odyssey*, prefaced with a bizarre extended comparison of the text with the body of a dead girl (p. 8) undergoing a post mortem exam, and by snide remarks concerning Milman Parry. Were it not that the author had established a reputation as editor before this, a reader might be forgiven for thinking the entire work either an obsessive's delusions or an ingenious self-parody.

re-performances in interactive settings.¹³ It is an aesthetic nicely satirized by Tzvetan Todorov in an essay from thirty years ago, on the quest for “primitive narrative” according to which stories must follow “laws” of verisimilitude, stylistic unity, “the priority of the serious,” non-contradiction, non-repetition, and non-digression.¹⁴ In order to envision an intratextual reading of the *Iliad*, we should reject the genetic/Analyst approach embodied by van Thiel and his adherents, precisely so that we can investigate the prematurely suppressed, messier aspects of the text in all their manifestations. In my view, contradictions, repetitions, digressions and other anomalies (for example, Book 10 of the *Iliad*, more on which below) are rich with meaning and should not be erased from our texts in the process of a misguided search for the “real” Homer.¹⁵ That is to say, the Homeric poems *are* texts, in the sense of cohesive discourses, rather than compilations of sentences from various other texts. They happen to show features more characteristic of spontaneous, unrevised discourse, features that highly literate culture tends to reject. But this does not mean we should force them to fit a modern literary-critical mold.

Before examining the opportunities opened by this discourse-perspective, it is worth pointing out two other obstacles to the sort of intratextual reading I have in mind. Both grow out of a reaction to Analyst critical methods, and both take notice of work on oral poetics, but leave us with an *Iliad* either too “loose” or “tight” to handle as discourse. On one side lies what I shall call “structural” dogma, the belief that finding responsion between passages and lines within the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* attests to unitary, monumental composition, and therefore to one controlling intelligence, that of the genius poet Homer. One variety of this approach uses the demonstrable complexity of the poems to wrest them from the hands of “oralists,” the standard line

¹³ A sample: van Thiel finds traces (p. 19) that the death of Patroclus must at one time have been carried out solely by Apollo, and then in another version with Hektor added, because the treatment in the existing *Iliad* violates reason: Apollo would not have been engaged in battle in Book 16 if he had heard Zeus’ prohibition against gods fighting, which we have at the beginning of Book 8. For the continuing disdain of anti-oralists, see Dawe 1993, 13–19.

¹⁴ Todorov 1971. The article was written in 1967. On the continuing assumption by some Hellenists that works of literature ought to conform with modern criteria for coherence, see the salutary review by Lynn-George 1982.

¹⁵ I do not wish at this point to enter into the recent debate on the status of Alexandrian readings, on which see most fully Nagy 1998. I note only that the approach of van Thiel, Janko, and Powell requires an interlocking set of questionable assumptions, such as an early, once-and-for-all fixation of an oral performance, subsequently immune to significant variation; the possibility for precise dating of oral-formulaic texts; early widespread literacy; and the figure of a “master” composer (or editor). I address this constellation of flawed hypotheses in a work in progress.

being that, even though the epics show signs of traditional composition, no oral poem could be so structured.¹⁶ This dogma derives, in modern times, from New Criticism, as appears most clearly in Cedric Whitman's version of the argument, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*.¹⁷ Whitman also brought into play two tropes that would become common in such arguments from design, the (allegedly related) patterning of early Greek vase painting and the outlining of the poem by means of elaborate, symmetrical charts.¹⁸ The most recent versions of this approach, those of Taplin and Stanley on the *Iliad*, illustrate both the tenacity of critical fixations on structure, and the subordination of literary criticism to "real" history. Thus, Stanley's book, after 250 pages meant to delineate complicated parallels and patterns, culminates in a quite positivist chapter, "Structure and the Homeric Question," and concludes that the *Iliad* is "distanced from its inherited medium" in attaining "literary form."¹⁹ One gets the impression that the structures are explicated mainly to argue the historical point (a sixth-century textualization of the poem). "Framing" and "ring-composition" are the devices most favored by his version of the approach; no attention is given to how an audience or reader would assimilate and react to such structures; we are meant to marvel; but some may want to ask, *cui bono*? Taplin's book appeared just a year before that of Stanley, so that they run on parallel lines, mutually unaware. By contrast with Stanley, Taplin imagines a poem that is conscious of its audience at all times. His argument, as well, heads towards a historical conclusion (that the *Iliad* was designed for performance at a three-day festival), and thus stresses structural components (a tripartite shape for the poem). But Taplin, perhaps from his experience as a critic of ancient drama, is more attuned to the effects of narrative movement throughout the composition, asking, for instance, what the effect of accumulated parallels (e.g. visit scenes) might have been on an audience. Instead of frames and rings, he works with notions of "stored allusions" and "resonances." He explicitly rejects the "scripsist" notion that only the employment of writing could have produced such effects.²⁰ Nevertheless there is in the book a strong tug towards

¹⁶ Skaftø Jensen (1980, 28–45) effectively rebuts arguments that cite "quality" as proof of a written text.

¹⁷ For a fair critique of Whitman, see Tsagarakis 1982, 3–6.

¹⁸ The reverse side of the dust cover to Whitman's book contained the whole "geometric structure of scenes in the *Iliad*," suitable for framing.

¹⁹ Stanley 1993, 296.

²⁰ Taplin 1992, 36.

tight-lacing and an interest in *Fernbeziehungen*, which are then interpreted as a sign of masterly composition.²¹ “It is part of the *Iliad*’s greatness, and one of the ways it rewards an attentive audience,” says Taplin, “that such detailed and powerful connections are made across such huge narrative distances.” Once again, the dominant, authorizing image of the structural approach is monumentality. Whether or not the distant connections are used to argue for an *Iliad* composed in writing, their existence seems to be regarded as more important than the narrative flux within the poem. We might ask: what about *near* relations? What can the immediate juxtapositions of passages, styles, and motifs, or even disjunctions, reveal?

If such approaches are laced too tight to allow one to appreciate the flow and texture of the poem, another set of responses fails to satisfy because it directs attention to “looseness” of construction, only in the service of a larger, historicizing argument about parataxis in oral poetry. This is the approach associated primarily with James Notopoulos, an early adherent of the work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord; it gained prominence later through the writings of Ong, Havelock, and other less scholarly exponents of the notion of “oral” mentality, a concept that arguably set back the study of Homeric style as much as it advanced recognition of the culturally different aspects of an archaic social context.²² Notopoulos contrasted what he called the “paratactic and inorganic flexible unity” of Homer with later, Aristotelian ideals of poetic unity. One could easily agree with his protest against the tyranny of the *Poetics* in critical discussions of epic, however, without necessarily accepting the further step, in which Notopoulos seems to conceive of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as comprising nothing *but* digressions. In his reaction against the Aristotelian-inspired Analysts, he flees to the other extreme, arguing that Homeric narrative as a whole resembles the structure of its frequent paratactic clauses, the *lexis eiromenê* identified by Aristotle on the level of the sentence. Digressions, he argued, “far from being like Homer’s similes, for purposes of relief, are actually the substance of the narrative, strung paratactically like beads on a string.”²³

Several questions arise from this appraisal. If digressions are in fact organic, in this new definition of the term, then why not similes as well? Why

²¹ On “distant relations” in the poem, see now Reichel 1994, with full bibliography and critique of earlier studies.

²² It is significant that Havelock 1963 cites Notopoulos (eight times) more than he does either Lord (five times) or Parry (three times) in his list of modern authorities, p. 328. For a critique of this school and for further bibliography, see now Bakker 1997.

²³ Notopoulos 1949, 6.

should they be “relief” any more or less than “digressions”? Why should we assume that a work displaying a heavy use of parataxis syntactically should do so at higher narratological levels? Is this not a kind of primitivist determinism? Surely Aristotle, in the discussion cited by Notopoulos (*Rhetoric* 3.9), applies his notion of additive style only to sentences; it is simply misleading for Notopoulos to claim the philosopher’s “pregnant remarks” on the first sentence of Herodotus “show that he is conscious of a *type of literature*, of which Herodotus is a late survival” (my emphasis). For Aristotle’s own definition of *lexis* in the *Poetics* proves that it does not extend beyond sentential syntax. He does not articulate anything like a discourse grammar, let alone a theory of “types” of literature distinguished by their different *lexeis*. Notopoulos’ calculated misreading of Aristotle is only compounded in Havelock’s generalizations, which verge on attributing *Urdummheit* to Homer’s audience. In parataxis, he finds the expression of a “law” applicable “to all that ‘knowledge’ which the tribal encyclopedia may contain,” i.e., discrete, isolated bits of information, all that the short attention span of pre-Classical Greeks can comprehend.²⁴

Most important for what follows, this “loose” construction of epic style neglects the actual scene-by-scene interpretation of the poems, albeit in a different way than that of “tight” interpreters. While the latter focus on static, rigid structures, the former privilege an alleged *lack* of structure, only for purposes of reconstructing some sort of cognitive evolution. Both brands of theory undervalue the dynamic movement of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. What is wanted now, it seems, is a processual method, one that would account for the shaping of the poem in performance, and one that takes account of a generation’s linguistic work in discourse analysis. The recent work of Bakker represents something in this mode, as one workable approach to outlining the rhetoric of Homeric passages through the study of deictics and discourse particles; it also offers a powerful refutation of earlier critics’ resort to “parataxis.”²⁵ But as he deals with stretches of text involving no more than a few connected sentences, Bakker’s focus necessarily bypasses the level of the episode.²⁶ It is at this narrative level that the notion of *intra-textual*

²⁴ Havelock 1963, 185. Also involved in this view are relics of Romantic notions on Homeric primitivism, on which see now McLane and Slatkin 2011.

²⁵ Bakker 1997, esp. 35–53, 86–122.

²⁶ Other recent approaches based on structures of plot or point-of-view are quite useful but less concerned with the intratextual flow of the poem. De Jong 1997, in focusing exclusively on what she calls “focalization,” sidesteps texture, pace, and order, among other key narratological aspects. Schein 1997 accommodates the idea of symmetry to an appreciation of the linear progress of narrative, at

reading, I believe, bears investigating within Homeric criticism. As a test case, *Iliad* 11.655–803 will offer us a longer narrative, the interpretation of which has several consequences for our reading of the text as also for constructing theory.

II. Tales and Texts

As the tide of battle turns against the Achaeans, and the heroes Odysseus, Diomedes, and Agamemnon are wounded, Patroclus is summoned by Achilles and sent to find out the identity of the latest casualty, whom he has glimpsed Nestor escorting from the field. A quick look into the old man's hut tells Patroclus that it is Machaon who has been hit; as he starts back to report this to Achilles, Patroclus is detained by Nestor, who proceeds to instruct him by means of a long autobiographical tale about his youthful exploits in Pylos (lines 664–762). “This lifelike picture of a little border raid,” observed Leaf, “is in itself inimitable, and we may well be grateful for it. But yet, if we take it with its context, we are forced to admit that it has no bearing on the situation, and is grotesquely out of place at a moment when Patroclus has refused even to sit down, in order that he may return with all speed to Achilles.”²⁷ As typical as this Analyst critique is, nevertheless we must resist a response that would seek to argue for the relevance of the episode: that would mean being trapped in the same interpretive mode, being forced to read the poem as though only passages that made an immediate and direct impact on advancing the plot were the ones that mattered.

Let us admit, instead, that this speech of Nestor strikes a modern listener as digressive. An “emic” poetics of the sort I am advocating would next question this very category: in ancient Greek terms, is there even an equivalent for the critical judgment embedded in “digression”?²⁸ Is there a value attached to the phenomenon of speaking off-topic? Norman Austin pointed the way to a less culturally biased perception of “digression” by showing that

a higher structural level. Morrell 1996 offers an important perspective on a “fractal” non-linear compositional style, while Minchin 1992 makes use of recent work from cognitive psychology in evaluating oral-poetic conventions.

²⁷ Leaf 1900, 465. He notes the “Odyssean” character of language in the episode, the use of the four-horse chariot, and the composer’s supposed ignorance of western Peloponnesian topography as further evidence of lateness.

²⁸ Cf. J. M. Foley (1997, 2) on the project of ethnopoetics to recover the “endemic” expressive structures of narratives. Although he is speaking about a compositional, rather than evaluative, mode, the point applies equally.

this device works in two key ways within Homeric poetry: to encapsulate stories that are paradigmatic for heroic behavior and to highlight crucial moments of the plot. As Austin notes: "In paradigmatic digressions the length of the anecdote is in direct proportion to the necessity for persuasion at the moment."²⁹ In the case of Nestor, his anecdotal speech "is long precisely because the situation is desperate."³⁰

We could build on this insight in several ways. First, while it may seem contrary to our notions of poetry, which are a late Romantic inheritance, epic is itself a form of rhetoric and so prizes persuasive speech, the more so as that speech reaches monumental proportion.³¹ Furthermore, embedded in Greek syntax, morphology, and poetic diction we find traces of a different attitude than ours, one that seems to present the *highly* relevant as being "aside." Consider the noun *paradeigma*, which designates a standard, most often in the context of an overt or implied speech-act where an authority points to, shows, or mentions a different standard to an observer. Socrates in the *Apology* (23b) points out to the jury that Apollo had thus meant him to be a *paradeigma*, "as if he should say that 'this one of you, humans, is the wisest—the one who like Socrates recognized that he has no value, really, when it comes to wisdom.'" It is in the nature of *paradeigmata* to be, literally, "sideshows," with the qualification that the "side" concern is, for a time, the essential. I suggest that this paradoxical semantic field of the preverb *para-* can be explained by assuming that it is structured around the shifting nature of discourse, as it alternates between the points-of-view of speaker and addressee. That is, what appears to the *addressee* as "aside"—something requiring attention to be diverted—is from the *speaker's* viewpoint "beside"—something brought into discussion and placed quite close to the person addressed. We can extend this structure to explicate the semantics of at least three related terms describing speech-acts that form the core of important Greek discourse-genres: *parabasis* (the "step aside" of the Old Comic chorus); *parabolê* (the comparison, later "parable"—cf. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 2.20.4); and *parainesis*. The lattermost can be seen as a key genre,

²⁹ Austin 1966, 306.

³⁰ Austin 1966, 312. On the central importance of so-called digressions, see also Friedrich 1975, 102–7.

³¹ I examine some implications of the analogy between represented speech and epic discourse in Martin 1989.

one that frames the discourse of didactic, elegiac, and even dramatic poetry in Greece.³²

There is a wider theoretical point to be made here. By now, it should be clear that such intra-textual features as cohesion, continuity, and unity *cannot be textually* determined. Instead, they flow from a speech community's sense of appropriate, genre-bound behaviors.³³ Without a sense of these internal boundaries, i.e., a cultural poetics, we are working in the dark. Yet, even if we see that "digressions" such as Nestor's are integral to the societal speech-habits enshrined in epic, and determine that the "aside" of *Iliad* 11.656–803 is culturally and poetically essential, it remains to examine the texture of his speech. Somewhat paradoxically, that texture turns out to be distinctively different from the rest of the poem. Of course, this is not cause to delete it; by being different, it draws attention with subtle irony to the gap between Nestor's paradigm of the past and the present reality: although it is fitting for the old warrior to mark this dramatic moment with a long story, the story itself does not quite fit.

To begin at the level of theme, the story from his youth that Nestor chooses to relate hardly matches the present situation. Mabel Lang has remarked that "cattle and wars about cattle-raiding are highly irrelevant to Homer's purpose and could even be embarrassing as parallels for the war over Helen, so Homer's use of such stories despite their possible awkwardness suggests that they played a major role in Pylion tradition."³⁴ Although the themes might seem incongruent, we should not resort too quickly to an extra-textual solution—an alleged necessity to feature local Pylion traditions—without evidence of similar exceptions, and before exhausting intra-textual considerations. Since Homeric poetry tends towards quite the opposite tack, leveling local traditions in favor of Panhellenic narrative, an intra-textual approach seems the wiser option.³⁵ We should ask instead what meaning might inhere in such thematic clashes.

Another set of differences emerges when one compares Nestor's clearly paradigmatic speech with other examples of the genre within Homeric poetry. Victoria Pedrick finds not only that the *paradeigma* is unsuitable to

³² On the poetics of *parainesis*, see Chapter 12 below; Latacz 1977; and Kurke 1990. Hubbard 1991 shows that *parabases*, rather than offering mere asides, are integral sites for intertextual allusion in Aristophanes.

³³ Létoublon 1990, 181–82 makes a similar point about repetition of messages in the *Iliad*.

³⁴ Lang 1987, 334.

³⁵ On epic's Panhellenic preference, see Nagy 1999b, 139–41.

the point the aged hero apparently is trying to make, but also that, unlike the seven other *paradeigma*-speeches in the *Iliad* (including three by Nestor, at 1.254–84, 7.124–60, 23.626–50), this long speech in Book 11 is not addressed to the person for whom it is meant; contains an implicit rather than overt message; and lacks details that would tailor it to the ultimate addressee.³⁶ “Ironically the *paradeigma* works,” notes Pedrick, “on the wrong hero. Patroclus does not pass on the lesson to his friend; instead he attempts his own *aristeia*.”³⁷

Introducing the concept of irony into the discussion of this passage is an important first step that can take us even further. For there are several layers of irony underlying Nestor’s seemingly off-target advice. Pedrick has pointed to what we might call dramatic irony: an event turns out differently than characters in the poem might have predicted; Patroclus fights in Achilles’ stead, though the message of Nestor seems to have been meant for the latter. But at least two other layers emerge here, of ironies built into characterization, and it is difficult to decide which, if either, is basic. Nestor can be seen as a well-meaning adviser, an acknowledged authority and speaker, whose wisdom nevertheless is ultimately exposed as dangerously irrelevant. Or, he can be viewed, more cynically, as the villain of the piece, whose autobiographical anecdote is calibrated precisely to rouse Patroclus to fight, even beyond his mandate (with predictable results).

Parallels for either prospect occur elsewhere in Homeric verse; significantly, they also involve Nestor. Thus, in the *Odyssey*, we hear the old king hinting broadly to Telemachus that he should eliminate the suitors by imitating Orestes, who avenged his father’s death (*Odyssey* 3.195–200). The heroic paradigm is clearly wrong, as even the young addressee, in this case, seems to realize, when he replies that the gods have not given *him* such strength. Nestor’s misapplication of the paradigm is all the more visible to an audience because it repeats the advice of Athena/Mentes (1.289–302), but is noticeably less careful. Whereas she had told Telemachus to play Orestes’ role *after* determining that Odysseus is dead (1.289), Nestor attaches no such precaution. Athetizing lines 3.199–200, as Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus did, avoids some awkwardness, but at the cost of eliminating the irony that may have been integral to traditional conventions for representing Nestor in epic. In this case, the critical response that seeks to help a Homeric character appear smarter could be bleaching out opposing

³⁶ Pedrick 1983, 57.

³⁷ Pedrick 1983, 68.

but subtle dramatic effects within the compositions. As for the other view, that Nestor may represent an authoritative force both irresistible and of ambiguous intent, we have the odd picture of Nestor both embodying (*Iliad* 2.20–22) and approving (2.80–83) the deceptive dream sent to Agamemnon by Zeus: a preternatural manipulator.

In the sort of critique just mentioned, the Alexandrian scholars' low tolerance for intra-textual dissonance anticipates Analyst objections. Thankfully, athetesis, as far as can be seen, did not lead to the deletion of verses in later editions, so that rich poetic material survives, even if shadowed by Hellenistic critical suspicions.³⁸ The case is somewhat different with variant readings, where the efforts of modern, reductive editing (see Part I above) can obscure the very details of difference and disjunction that give a varied texture to Homeric mimesis. Nestor's speech provides a good example in its first line (11.656):

τίπτε **τ'ᾶρ** ὃδ' Ἀχιλῆυς ὀλοφύρεται υἱας Ἀχαιῶν

Why, then, does Achilles feel pity for the sons of Achaeans ...

The OCT (Monro and Allen) and van Thiel print the particle string (which I have boldfaced and translated “then”) and supply no variants in the apparatus. Allen's later *editio maior* of the *Iliad*, however, reveals that at least one family of manuscripts has, instead, at this point the word **τάρ**, an enclitic conjunction that Herodian said should be read at several places in Homer.³⁹ In the light of recent work by Watkins, arguing that the Greek conjunction is formally and functionally matched by a cuneiform Luvian locative particle, one might imagine that this is indeed a very old piece of Homeric Greek; further work by Katz demonstrates the degree to which it is embedded in a few restricted formula classes.⁴⁰ One of these is its use to make more forceful

³⁸ We can only conjecture about what additional verses may have been dropped, leaving no trace in the scholia regarding the early critical opinions about their status. Recently, awareness has grown that “plus-verses” attested in Homeric papyri (but not by medieval mss.) are textually valuable and even necessary; see, for example, Natalucci 1996.

³⁹ See LSJ⁹ s.v., where, however, the information on mss. attestation needs updating. Mazon 1937 prints **τάρ** in his text at 11.656, and translates “*pourquoi ... pleure-t-il donc tant ...*”

⁴⁰ Watkins 1995, 150–51. I wish to thank Joshua Katz, who kindly showed me the text of his 1996 paper delivered at the meeting of the American Philological Association, detailing the deployment of this word within Homer (now published as Katz 2007). For a sceptical appraisal of Watkins' suggestion, see Dunkel 2008. As an alternative to the view that Homeric language preserves an inherited older particle *tar, diachronically distinct in meaning and etymology from τ'ᾶρ, one could imagine the synchronic co-existence of a semantically distinct unverbated form (τάρ) alongside the

interrogatives (who/where/why *in the world*), an effect that makes sense in Nestor's question. What deserves notice, in line with my argument, is the uniqueness of this rare particle: of the seventeen times that τίπτε occurs in the *Iliad*, only here is it followed by the archaic form τάρ. I suggest that this usage fits an attempt to make Nestor's language and style *sound old*, as though coming from a different generation.⁴¹

Such a micro-level stylistic feature, by itself, might seem a matter of coincidence. Therefore, it is worth remarking that the same speech contains a larger structure that also sounds like a rare archaism, a fragment of Mycenaean Greek discourse. Lines 677–81 tote up the stock netted in the Pylians' retaliatory raid on the people of Elis:

ληΐδα δ' ἐκ πεδίου συνελάσσαμεν ἥλιθα πολλὴν
 πεντήκοντα βοῶν ἀγέλας, τόσα πῶεα οἰῶν,
 τόσσα συῶν συβόσια, τόσ' αἰπόλια πλατέ' αἰγῶν,
 ἵππους δὲ ξανθὰς ἑκατὸν καὶ πεντήκοντα
 πάσας θηλείας, πολλῇσι δὲ πῶλοι ὑπῆσαν.

We rustled together booty from the plain, a great hoard:
 fifty herds of cattle, as many flocks of sheep,
 as many herds of swine, as many broad goat-herdings,
 and as for tawny horses: one-hundred fifty,
 all mares, many with foals alongside.

The triplex τόσα ... τόσσα ... τόσ'... in this miniature catalogue is unparalleled within Homer. But the structure and the function of the list bear a close resemblance to Linear B texts, contemporary with the probable era of the Trojan War, discovered on tablets from what has been called Nestor's own "palace" at Pylos. Though dealing with grain rather than livestock, the lists of goods within a palace economy in this way pinpoint each item with "so much" (*Documents in Mycenaean Greek* 114 = PY En 609.1–3):

Pa-ki-ja-ni-ja **to-sa** da-ma-te DA 40
to-so-de te-re-ta e-ne-si: (men 14)

non-lexicalized particle sequence, parallel to the co-existence of γάρ and γ' ἄρ', as proposed by Nagy 2004, 73–4 and n.130, updated in the online version of 2017: http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn3:hul.ebook:CHS_Nagy.Homers_Text_and_Language.2004..

⁴¹ One of the few Iliadic instances of interrogative *tis* + *tar* comes in the speech of an old man, Priam at *Iliad* 3.226, while two are in the poet's request formula to the Muse (1.8, 2.761—another old man's voice?).

wa-na-ta-jo-jo ko-to-na ki-ti-me-na **to-so-de** pe-mo (wheat 2)⁴²

There are so many *acreages* belonging to Pakija
and there are so many fief-holds upon them: 14 men.
The private plot of ?Wanataios: so much seed ...

In sum, Nestor here is speaking exactly in the manner of Bronze Age Pylian palace officials. Such archaic—or archaizing—touches are bound to make his rhetoric stand out in the flow of the poem.⁴³

At a higher stylistic level, Nestor's speech also draws attention to itself as different, at least in the high degree to which it uses a device merely glimpsed elsewhere in the *Iliad*. This is the backward-moving style of exposition that has been called "lyric narrative," a style that involves the starkest contrast between "story"—in the Formalist sense of the actual chain of events—and "discourse"—the order in which the teller recounts events.⁴⁴ When the old hero summons up his memories, it is not through a simple recollection of a raid, retold in flashback style. Instead, we are carried back through a series of narrative nodes, each prompting a chronologically earlier point (marked here as PR) to explicate motivation and cause:

671–72 There was a *neikos* with Elis, when I killed Itymoneus.
(PR) 674 He was guarding his cattle.
675–88 His death; return and division of spoils among Pylians.
(PR) 688 Elis owed many.
(PR) 689 Because we had been few and in bad shape.
(PR) 690 For Heracles had killed all but
one son.
694–95 So Elis mistreated us.
696–97 Neleus took his share of spoils.
(PR) 698–99 Because Elis owed him a chariot and team.
(PR) 701–2 It went there to compete and Augeias
kept it.

⁴² See Ventris and Chadwick 1973, 241–45 on #114–16 (= PY En 609, 74, 659); also, Bennett and Olivier 1973, 112–13. For another close parallel between a Pylos Mycenaean text and Homeric poetry, see Lang 1987, 334 on social structure as reflected in PY Cn3 and *Odyssey* 3.4–8. *Prima facie*, it is not impossible for such discourses to survive embedded in Homeric diction: for evidence that a major syntactic feature, so-called "tmesis," survives from *pre*-Mycenaean Greek in Homeric diction, see Horrocks 1980.

⁴³ The scholia (T ad 11.678–81) sense a stylistic difference: "one did not say these things any differently even in prose (*pezōi* ... *logōi*).

⁴⁴ On the complex structure and its similarity to Pindaric narrative, see Schadewaldt 1966:83–84. On the notions of story and discourse, Chatman 1978.

703–5 So Neleus had his share and made fair division of the rest.

706–61 Counter-raid by Elis, Nestor's *aristeia*.

Nestor's paradigmatic discourse about his youthful exploits steps back from its story-line three times; two of these involve further back-tracking. Whether or not the Iliadic narrator has aimed here at capturing an archaic discourse style, there can be no doubt that Nestor's way of describing his past is clearly different, at the structural level, from the poet's own mode of narration.⁴⁵ But it does not necessarily follow that Nestor's way is worse, or that, as Slater has suggested, "it must be meant to illustrate the deliberate bumbling of Nestor."⁴⁶ We could, after all, define Homeric style as deviating from an older norm represented by the mellifluous Nestor.⁴⁷

Differentiation of the type we have been analyzing occurs as well in the content of Nestor's tale. While it is true that the description of his triumph resembles the typical Iliadic *aristeia*, complete with helpful divinities, a crisis (750–51), battlefield biographies (739–41), and even a simile (747), Nestor's narrative also contains conspicuous features at variance with the surrounding epic.⁴⁸ He moves across a wider range of terrain and time, signposting each stage with geographical or temporal formulaic markers:

711 ἔστι δέ τις Θρυόεσσα πόλις αἰπεῖα κολώνη
There is a city Thryoessa, a steep hill ...

722 ἔστι δέ τις ποταμὸς Μινυήϊος εἰς ἄλλα βάλλων
There is a river Minueios running to the sea

725 ἔνθεν πανσυδίῃ σὺν τεύχεσι θωρηχθέντες
From there with all speed, armed with gear ...

753 ἔνθα Ζεὺς Πυλίοισι μέγα κράτος ἐγγυάλιξε
Then Zeus granted great power to the Pylians

⁴⁵ A point that is missed by Dickson 1995, who stresses the similarities between Nestor and narrator. If a style shared with much lyric is, indeed, marked as sounding "older," and therefore appropriate to Nestor, this would accord with Nagy's findings (1990) regarding the relative antiquity of lyric meter vs. Homeric hexameter.

⁴⁶ Slater 1983, 122.

⁴⁷ For appreciation of the persuasive artistry of Nestor's speech here, see Minchin 1991 and Dickson 1995, 173–79.

⁴⁸ On the similarities, see Pedrick 1983: 63–66; also, Fenik 1968, 113 who notes that "Nestor relates everything much more hurriedly than the poet himself normally does"; Hainsworth 1993, 298; and Dickson 1995, 173.

759 ἔνθ' ἄνδρα κτείνας πύματον λίπον αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοὶ
Then having killed the last man I left him ...

Similar phrases structure the poem's wider narrative, but never occur bunched in such small compass. The conclusion of the battle, also, is unlike anything in the *Iliad* in its elevation of the young hero to divine status:

761 πάντες δ' εὐχετόωντο θεῶν Διὶ Νέστορί τ' ἀνδρῶν.
They all prayed to Zeus, among gods, and Nestor among men.⁴⁹

Most striking, however, is the unique generic complexion of the tale, for the battlefield *aristeia* is only half the story; the episode starts with a nighttime raid that is clearly a warrior's initiation (11.683–85):

καὶ τὰ μὲν ἡλασάμεσθα Πύλον Νηληϊὸν εἴσω
ἐννύχιοι προτὶ ἄστυ γεγήθει δὲ φρένα Νηλεΐς,
οὔνεκά μοι τύχε πολλὰ νέφ πόλεμον δὲ κιόντι.

And we drove them into Pylos, Neleus' town,
by night. And Neleus was glad at heart
because much fell to me when I went new to war.

The traditional nature of this raid story can be detected even within Homeric diction: the name of Achilles' son, Neoptolemus, “new to war,” encapsulates the theme of Nestor's tale. In its only two appearances within epic (*Iliad* 19.327, *Odyssey* 11.506), the name occupies exactly the metrical position (after the trochaic caesura) that the phrase νέφ πόλεμον fits here. And the *Odyssey* passage reflects the same narrative movement: Achilles in the underworld rejoices (γηθοσύνη, *Odyssey* 11.540) on hearing Odysseus relate the story of young Neoptolemus' wartime exploits, as Neleus rejoiced (γεγήθει) over his son. Comparative evidence from the early literature of Ireland and India (cultures with traditions cognate to Greek) shows that initiatory raid stories, with similar details, are a very old genre.⁵⁰ It is the occurrence of this theme, and not any alleged “late” compositional traits that accounts for the similarity between Nestor's tale and the *Odyssey* at the level of diction. The appearance of a number of words only here in the

⁴⁹ Schadewaldt 1966, 86.

⁵⁰ See Bader 1980; also Athanassakis 1992, with further bibliography. Frame 1978, 86–115 brilliantly recovers the mythopoeic resonances of Nestor's cattle-raid in Indo-European terms. His findings concerning the story in *Iliad* Book 11 are expanded and further solidified in Frame 2009, 48–49, 105–21, 728–33.

Iliad, but with parallels in the *Odyssey*, does not mean that an “*Odyssey*-Poet” composed Nestor’s speech.⁵¹ It does alert us, however, to a shift in style within the *Iliad*, as if the nighttime and fantastic world of the other epic, in which a solitary hero lives by his wits, bubbles up into Nestor’s memory. The *Odyssey*, of course, is framed by a detailed initiation story, that of Telemachus, like Nestor (11.693) a lone son.⁵² Formally and functionally, the initiation tale reminds us of the famous “digression” concerning the scar of Odysseus (*Odyssey* 19.393–466).⁵³ That story of first-blood precedes a heroic epiphany, as does Nestor’s the epiphany of Patroclus, albeit the latter story, as Pedrick saw, ironically substitutes the telling of an old *aristeia* just when a new, live version is demanded.⁵⁴

Thus, the deep mythic past and a temporally closer epic expression of theme in the *Odyssey* offer two “intertexts” of Nestor’s raid story.⁵⁵ But intratextually, it seems to stand, like its protagonist, alone. It marks itself out as different. Raids and booty are mentioned in the poem, in connection with the earlier deeds of Achilles: his sack of Lurnêssos (20.187–94) and Thêbê (1.366–69, 6.414–28), the latter being the ultimate cause of his quarrel with Agamemnon. These, however, remain off-stage; like the Fall of Troy (also described in terms of booty—cf. 9.138, 18.327), raids are never dramatized in the poem. There is one significant exception: the *Doloneia* of Book 10.

If it seems that comparing Book 11 with 10 is to analyze *obscurum per obscurius*, this is mainly because the episode describing the night-raid of Diomedes and Odysseus has suffered the same critical dismissal as Nestor’s tale. Burnt with the brand of “late,” “unIliadic,” and “interpolated,” it has failed to attract attention for its poetic qualities. This is unfortunate; whatever its origins, Book 10 *has* been integrated into the *Iliad*. As the latest commentator says, “although since antiquity opinion has been virtually universal among Homerists that the Book does not form part of the design

⁵¹ For the list, see Cantieni 1942, 12.

⁵² See Martin 1993 on the poetic implications of this framing.

⁵³ It is interesting that 11.677 ἤλιθα πολλήν, found only here in the *Iliad*, occurs in the scar-story (*Odyssey* 19.443).

⁵⁴ Pedrick 1983, 66.

⁵⁵ For a cogent analysis of how the term might apply to Greek oral traditions, see Edmunds 1995, 4–7. I do not mean to imply that the *Iliad* refers to other written texts; it may make reference to fairly fixed *themes*.

of the *Iliad* ... the Book is not an *Einzellied*.”⁵⁶ I suggest that it is precisely at such junctures—when a passage is judged “different”—that intratextual criticism proves most useful. All that we have learned from the continuing study of intertextuality can aid us in making more fine-scale and sophisticated internal analyses: “In principle, the same forces of cohesion and disintegration are in operation within a text as between texts.”⁵⁷

The apparent “disintegration” caused by Book 10 must be seen in close relation to the following episode. Diction provides signals towards this reading: for example, “Odyssean” language has been seen to characterize Book 10, like Nestor’s story.⁵⁸ Athena plays a major role, and receives offerings, in both episodes (10.460, 11.729). More pointedly, it is Nestor who devises the spy-mission (10.204–17), and Nestor who waits to welcome them back joyfully (10.532–53), as his father did long ago for him. In short, any attempt to dismiss Book 10 from our *Iliad* must be constrained by the appearance of this raid theme, in stylized remembrance, in Book 11. As much as Nestor’s, Diomedes’ raid is a *rite de passage*.⁵⁹ They are mutually reinforcing, shared attempts to vary the texture of the poem. To put the critical situation more positively, Nestor’s story is clearly all one piece: a raid and distribution (11.671–707) followed by a pitched battle (708–61), both within an initiatory setting. There is no reason why the *Iliad*, as a larger-scale discourse, should not then include both night raid (Book 10) and day battles. To represent the entirety of heroic experience, the poem, in fact, *must* include both sides.⁶⁰

To conclude, we can go further into the poetics of the *Iliad* as a whole by paying attention to three devices interacting here, all of which are central to intratextual analysis. First, framing. Nestor’s story with stress laid on the proper compensation that resulted from his raid (11.696–705) is thematically relevant to the outer story, the initial conflict of the *Iliad*, centered on the theme of fair division.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Hainsworth 1993, 151; on the arguments for separate authorship, see his summary of the controversy, pp. 151–55. Further on Book 10: Fowler 2000.

⁵⁷ Kolarov 1992, 35.

⁵⁸ Hainsworth 1993, 154.

⁵⁹ On this see Schnapp–Gourbeillon 1982.

⁶⁰ Another excursive passage, on the Shield, seems to make an effort to combine the two types of fighting, by *dolos* and by *biê*: 18.516–40. These may be emblemized within the passage by the unusual cooperation of Ares and Athena (18.516).

⁶¹ The theme is embodied in the formula *dais—eisê*: cf. *Iliad* 1.468, 602; 2.431 and esp. 9.225 (with Hainsworth 1993, 94–95) and cf. 11.705: δαίτρεῦν, μή τις οἱ ἀτεμβόμενος κίοι ἴσῃς.

The strategy of valorizing what might otherwise seem like intrusive or extraneous episodes by relating them to a frame-narrative relies on the recognition of similarity.⁶² The same happens, to some extent, with the second phenomenon involved here: the *mise en abyme*, a text-within-text that functions as a microcosm or mirror of the text itself.⁶³ I propose that Nestor's narrative in Book 11 is precisely such a mirror, but that it is a distorting device. As the *mise en abyme* in modern fiction has been found to suggest other possibilities for the narrative, "to fill in 'blanks' when abundant, form them when scarce, or hollow them out by filling them," in Dällenbach's words, so Nestor's autobiography works to heighten our sense of difference within the poem's world. It draws our attention precisely because it is itself so different in texture and style from what precedes. The battle at Troy is not the same as a Pylian raiding expedition; Patroclus is not a young initiate, nor is Achilles (if anyone, it is Diomedes); Helen is not the same as stolen cattle. To the *Iliad's* propensity for depicting faulty communication (cf. Agamemnon's Dream), surely we should attribute the contrast between Nestor's paradigm about booty and Achilles' already-stated rejection, during the Embassy, of exactly this model (9.406–9):

Cows and sturdy flocks can be got by raids [*lêistoi*]
 Tripods are to be had, and tawny horses' heads,
 But a man's *psykhê* cannot return or be taken as booty [*lêistê*] ...

Achilles already realizes that glory at Troy can only mean his death, not the start of a glorious career. Nestor's paradigm does *not* fit, and is meant to be *seen* not fitting. If it succeeds, it is only because a more gullible audience hears the old man's Siren song.⁶⁴ I leave to critics with a more deconstructive bent the conclusions to be drawn from such a representation of rhetoric and reception. At any rate, I believe this effect is all the more highlighted by the third intratextually charged feature: juxtaposition. The *Doloneia*, after all, did not have to precede so closely Nestor's paradigmatic persuasion, nor did it have to come so close on the heels of Achilles' rejection of the raid-mentality. The process of performance, however, that singer-audience proximity that must underlie the *Iliad* at some point, produces meaning and coherence from

⁶² Frangoulidis 1997 is a good illustration of this sort of reading.

⁶³ On the role of *mise en abyme* in enabling a reading of the larger text, see Dällenbach 1986, 9–23, and Fowler 2000.

⁶⁴ See Dickson 1995, 195–97 on Nestor as Siren. To my mind, he does not account for Nestor as an even more sinister figure.

this very device of close “bundling” of episodes that are meant to be felt as related.⁶⁵ I stress this device because it gives value to a poetic phenomenon that is at the opposite extreme from the long-distance, structural connections often favored by those who defend Homeric artistry.

What results for our interpretation from the combination of these poetic strategies? At one level, the *Iliad* appears to offer a sobering view of its own constructedness: the poetic description of individual *aristeiai*, the art that occupies much of the poem itself, is revealed to have its roots in highly contingent, rhetorically slanted autobiography. Even the management of war, if we consider Nestor’s choreography as central to the plot of Book 10, is seen to stem from a commander’s memory of his own youthful raiding experience. On another level, the poem clearly makes a point of transcending personal experience, of deriving its narrative not from human *kleos* but from divine autopsy (*Iliad* 2.484–93), as if the poet realizes thoroughly the persuasive perils of stories like Nestor’s. Then again, paying heed to the order in which Books 10 and 11 unfold—which is to say, processing the poem, like an audience, intratextually, with all its bumps and fissures—action precedes meditation. We feel the excitement, *first*, of the raid and kill (Book 10) before we realize, in the *next* episode, that Nestor has staged it all, perhaps even in a misguided attempt to relive his own youth. That realization is itself a bitter message, but no more acidic than the rest of the *Iliad*’s careful dissection of the mechanics of glory. In this intratextual reading, finally, the *Iliad* understands itself far better than did many of its future listeners and critics; its composer, one senses, would understand the lament of a much later writer (and ex-Marine), the late André Dubus: “I have always known that writing fiction had little effect on the world; that if it did, young men would not have gone to war after the *Iliad*.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See the essays in Gernsbacher and Givón 1995 on the phenomenon within natural language.

⁶⁶ Dubus 1991, 87.

II

MYTHIC HYMNISTS, HISTORICAL PERFORMERS

APOLLO'S KITHARA AND POSEIDON'S CRASH-TEST RITUAL AND CONTEST IN THE EVOLUTION OF GREEK AESTHETICS¹

The concepts of verbal articulation (*logos*) and material craft-ability (*tekhnê*) are related in the ancient Greek imaginary. This relationship has played a major role in shaping the ways in which we still understand aesthetics and performance, as well as the aesthetics of performances. Some important features in the early Greek development of this intellectual matrix form the core of what follows, as I examine two specific examples in order to highlight the bonds among craft, art, ritual, and performances (verbal, as well as other) in the ancient Greek *mentalité*. As with so many Greek performance traditions, those that I shall analyze have been “mythologized” through consistent references to the functions and typical behaviors of certain divine figures: here, Apollo and Poseidon.

What unites the mythopoetic examples that we shall examine is the presence of the contest (*agôn*) and the crucial notion, arising from this quint-essential Greek idea, of *krisis*, which we can translate “judgment under pressure.”²

As an indication of their enduring importance as well as the high stakes involved in these concepts, we should take note of the semantic shading of their English derivatives: “agony” and “crisis.” It seems, in other words, that for mortals to make an impact through *logos* and *tekhnê* is potentially fraught

¹ Some material in this essay also appears in an article published in Spanish as “Apolo, el ejecutante,” in *Mito y performance: De Grecia a la modernidad*, ed. A. M. González de Tobía (La Plata, Argentina: Editorial de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2010), 17–41.

² Fundamental for the discussion of *agôn* is Nagy 1990, 385–87, also 118–22; for *krisis* 61–63; in relation to *agôn* 402–3.

with dangers, rendering the outcomes—expressions and arts of all types—all the more precious. This attitude toward verbal and material craft, arising from a specific context of rituals and festivals, may be said to mark the classical tradition in literature and art for all of subsequent Western culture.

Once we have acknowledged the prejudice encapsulated in our typical application of the adjectives “humble” to craft, versus “intricate” to art, we might ask how we can escape the attitudes fostered by industrialization, technology (a word to which I shall return), elitist education, post-Enlightenment privileging of the “rational” and the closely related Romantic equating of “traditional” with “primitive.” The philologist’s instinct is to delve into the earliest texts and pay attention to the nuances of usage and diction regarding *logos* and *tekhnê*. This is not the place for a full-scale analysis.³ Instead, let us observe that the most striking result of such investigations, in terms of the cultural attitudes they indicate, is that material and verbal skills (those that we can tentatively assign, respectively, to *tekhnê* and *logos*) are not in a relationship of subordination (one low and the other higher). Weaving, carpentry, metalworking, painting, sculpture, embroidery—all of these *tekhnai* are by no means humble. They are instead quite literally divine.

From our earliest sources in Mycenaean Greek, it is obvious that such crafts and their practitioners are not only of highest value to the palace economies of Pylos, Knossos, Thebes, and Chania. They are also intimately tied to the religious rituals of the Mycenaean kings. Weaving women and shining cloth, well-shaped chariots, their wheels, poles, and chassis, subject to collection and redistribution by the central palaces, are not only the prerogatives of the elite but are integral to the display of power and control. And that display, in turn, is crucial for the mediating role of Mycenaean kings, between the gods and their subjects.⁴ Of course, the bureaucratic texts in Mycenaean, such as we have them preserved on thousands of accidentally baked clay tablets in Linear B script, narrowly represent an entire culture that flourished between circa 1600–1200 BCE. They offer evidence for the organization and transfer of people and objects, but can tell us nothing of what the elites and their subjects *thought* about crafts. For the latter, the historian of ideas must rely on the testimony of a later era, the hexameter poetry of the archaic period (circa 750–500 BCE) that is attributed to Hesiod, along with the epics

³ For debates concerning the developing notions of *logos*, see the essays in Buxton 1999.

⁴ On Mycenaean palace economies and religious functions, see Lupack 2008. On the redistribution of luxury and other goods, see Killen 2008.

attributed to Homer (whom later ages supposed contemporary with Hesiod), and the “Homeric” hymns to various divinities. Once one focuses on notions of craft in this body of verse (something we tend to gloss over while reading for character and plot), an abundance of scenes and connections emerges. Let me mention just a few that can underscore the importance of craftwork to religion, and its “religious” status.

We can start with the most obvious, the employment of craft-workers to decorate and amplify the specific performances of worship. A bull to be sacrificed, for instance, could have its horns gilded. The *Odyssey*, describing how Telemachus is welcomed to a magnificent feast in Nestor's city of Pylos, takes care to include mention of a *khalkeus* or bronze-worker, named Laerkês, who also handles gold (*Odyssey* 3.432–38):

ἦλθε δὲ χαλκεὺς
 ὅπλ' ἐν χερσὶν ἔχων χαλκήϊα, πείρατα τέχνης,
 ἄκμονά τε σφυρὰν τ' εὐποίητόν τε πυράγρην,
 οἷσιν τε χρυσὸν ἐργάζετο· ἦλθε δ' Ἀθήνη
 ἰρῶν ἀντιώσωσα. γέρον δ' ἱππηλάτα Νέστωρ
 χρυσὸν ἔδωχ'· ὃ δ' ἔπειτα βοῶς κέρασιν περὶ χεῦεν
 ἀσκήσας, ἵν' ἄγαλμα θεᾷ κεινὰροιο ἰδοῦσα.

There came the bronze-worker, with bronze tools in his hands,
 the essentials of his craft [*tekhne*],⁵ anvil and hammer and well-made
 tongs,
 with which he worked gold. Athena came also to participate in the
 rites.

The old horseman Nestor gave the gold. And the smith then working
 it,
 sheathed the bull's horns, so that the goddess might take delight
 seeing the dedication.

As the language makes clear, the mediation of a craftsman transforms the natural object into an art-object, an attractive, pleasing dedication (like a cult statue: *agalma* can also mean this).⁶ At the same time, the explicit transfer of the precious gold from the king's palace to the craftsman makes clear that the success of a pleasing, beneficial ritual for the community depends on the intervention of the royal house.

⁵ Note that *peirata tekhnês* can also be honorific: the “ultimate limits” of craft—as if the tools embody his *tekhne*. On the complex semantics of *peirar*, see Bergren 1975.

⁶ For *agalma* as cult statue, see Nagy 1990, 364.

The same passage, with its mention of Athena (who is disguised as Mentor, an older man guiding Telemachus on his journey) should remind us that crafts have divine patronage as well. Athena *Erganê*, the “worker,” is connected with the arts of cloth-production, especially as they relate to the making of fabrics that are dedicated to gods—like herself.⁷ At the Panathenaea (depicted on the Parthenon frieze), one such woven article, the *peplos* for Athena’s great statue on the Acropolis, is carried in a dedicatory procession.⁸ Hephaestos, on the other hand, is connected with the working of metal. It is Athena who is linked further, by her very genealogy, with the kind of thinking characteristic of “craft”: *Mêtis* or “cunning intelligence,” her mother, was a goddess swallowed by Zeus to enable the chief god to control this potentially dangerous and deeply female “way of knowing.” *Mêtis* as common noun denotes as well non-linear, intuitive, on-the-spot, in-a-pinch capacities, the kind of peripheral mental vision and know-how that characterizes the helmsman of a ship and the driver of a chariot.⁹ The latter is especially relevant to the scenario I shall examine shortly.

In all the employments of *mêtis*, what we discover is that “craft” is a totalizing and honorific concept inclusive of “art” in the senses that the West has tended to use since the eighteenth century (as in “the fine arts”). Craft is at times closer to “craftiness,” at other times to “artfulness.” The key point is that *tekhnê* does not distinguish those ways of acting that will later be sorted out, contested, at times opposed to one another, as varied and divergent skills.

This is a good point at which to remind ourselves that *logos* is equally rich and broad in ancient usage. Sometimes interpreted as an overarching concept that covers the range represented by the Latin pair of terms *ratio* and *oratio*, *logos* is both mental skill (reason, intelligence—even *cunning intelligence*) and the product thereof (an account, verbal art). In the later sense, as becomes clear, it will tend to overlap with *tekhnê*, rather than be its polar opposite. For the making of well-shaped, appropriate, reasonable speech is as much a craft (or art) as is the weaving of cloth or the fashioning of useful objects in wood. It is emblematic of this association that the art/craft of poetry is presented within Greek poetry metaphorically in terms of weaving (*huphanas humnon*, “having woven a song”: Bacchylides 5.9–10) and carpentry (*tektones kômôn*,

⁷ On the goddess under her Athenian cult-title, see Pausanias *Description of Greece* 1.24.3.

⁸ See for a full description of this event and perspectives thereon, Neils 1992.

⁹ On “cunning intelligence,” see Detienne and Vernant 1978.

“shapers of celebration songs”: Pindar *Nemean* 3.4–5).¹⁰ In modern Greek, the word for literature—*logotekhnia* (“wordcraft”)—perfectly encapsulates a point of view that can already be detected in Greek texts from two and a half millennia earlier.¹¹

Time now to turn to the first of two case-studies.

Crash Test

In the *Hymn to Apollo* (circa 500 BCE?), which Thucydides, at least, attributed to Homer (3.104), the god is celebrated as the divine patron of two supremely important cult sites in Greece: the island of Delos and the mountain shrine at Delphi. The hymn narrates his birth in Delos, and then, in a very compressed *Bildungsroman*, his voyage to Delphi to establish the Pythian cult-center there. I will concentrate in the second part of this paper on the “crafts” united in Apollo’s divine repertoire—specifically music and poetry (taken as a unitary pair) and archery. These he possesses from his birth onward. But there is a mysterious episode, on his foundational journey, that involves another god and another craft. While journeying through Boeotia in his progress toward Parnassus, the young god Apollo stops at Onchestus, about twenty-five kilometers northwest of Thebes (which, the *Hymn* stresses, is not yet a city). The grove of Poseidon appears to have occupied the narrow pass (at modern Stení) on the road overlooking the Teneric Plain to the east and the Kopaic basin to the west.¹² The poet of the hymn provides a brief and intriguing digression about the place (230–38):

Ὅγχηστών δ' ἵξεσ Ποσιδήϊον ἀγλαὸν ἄλσος·
 ἔνθα νεοδμῆς πῶλος ἀναπνέει ἀχθόμενός περ
 ἔλκων ἄρματα καλά, χαμαὶ δ' ἐλατῆρ ἀγαθός περ
 ἐκ δίφροιο θορῶν ὁδὸν ἔρχεται· οἱ δὲ τέως μὲν

¹⁰ The metaphors are both of Indo-European date: see Durante 1976 and Nagy 1996a, 74–76.

¹¹ It is worth noting that another compound-noun—*tekhnologia*—containing the same lexical elements, in reverse order, points to the importance of verbal expression in relation to material skill: successful “technology” requires giving a reasoned account of craft; the ability to persuade (through diagram, theory, and proof) is central even to fields that seem at the furthest remove from verbal art; or, to speak gnominically: *tekhnologia* needs *logotekhnia*.

¹² Schachter 1986, 207–20 provides details of archaeological and inscriptional finds at the site, indicating a Bronze Age occupation and later cult activity dating to at least the sixth century BCE. The age of the cult is uncertain; it may continue practices of the second millennium. Teffeteller 2001 points to similar Near Eastern chariot rites of that era.

κείν' ὄχρα κροτέουσιν ἀνακτορίην ἀφιέντες.
 εἰ δέ κεν ἄρματ' ἀγῆσιν ἐν ἄλσει δειδυγμένοι,
 ἵππους μὲν κομέουσι, τὰ δὲ κλίναντες ἐῷσιν
 ὥς γὰρ τὰ πρῶτισθ' ὅσῃ γένηθ'· οἱ δὲ ἄνακτι
 εὐχονται, δίφρον δὲ θεοῦ τότε μοῖρα φυλάσσει.

You reached Poseidon's glorious grove, Onchestus,
 where the new-tamed colt takes a breather, burdened as it is
 pulling the beautiful chariot, and on the ground goes the driver, even
 a good one,
 having leapt from the chariot. Meanwhile, the horses
 casting off his lordship rattle the empty vehicle.
 If the chariot breaks in the wooded grove,
 they take care of the horses, but they leave the chariot tilted up.
 For thus first of all was the sacred rite. And they pray to the lord,
 but the god's dispensation then guards the chariot.

What does this strange ritual mean?¹³ Why is it even mentioned in the hymn? With religious rites, a linear interpretation is less persuasive—I would say, less possible—than an attempt to appreciate the multiple meanings, latent and overt, generated by a series of actions in the sacred sphere. The rite surely re-affirms and celebrates the commanding role of Poseidon when it comes to horses and horsemanship. Why the sea-god who is also the earthquake god (a scientific accuracy, tsunamis being no doubt known to the ancients) should be Hippios—Poseidon of Horses—has always been a matter for speculation. At an abstract level, the mystical association of sea-god with horse-god might well depend on the uncontrollable nature of both elements: in other words, horses are like the sea, and he who rules one can control the other. By extension chariots are like boats—and there is ancient evidence for this association.¹⁴ A wonderful image bringing the two together is that of Poseidon guiding his gold chariot from his sea-cave at Aegae across the sea on his way to aid the Greeks in their battle at Troy (*Iliad* 13.25–30):

γέντο δ' ἰμάσθλην
 χρυσεῖην εὐτυκτον, ἐοῦ δ' ἐπεβήσετο δίφρου,
 βῆ δ' ἐλάαν ἐπὶ κύματ' ἄταλλε δὲ κήτε' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ

¹³ The latest assessment, with a good summary of previous scholarly attempts, is Teffeteller 2001. Opinions range from seeing it as soliciting an augury to considering it as a test for horses and chariot-driving warriors.

¹⁴ See Nestor's "hymn" to *mētis* in *Iliad* 23.313–18, which associates woodcutters, helmsmen, and charioteers as those who use this intelligence.

πάντοθεν ἐκ κευθμῶν, οὐδ' ἡγνοίησεν ἀνακταῖ
 γηθοσύνη δὲ θάλασσα δίστατο· τοῖ δὲ πέτοντο
 ῥίμφα μάλ', οὐδ' ὑπένερχε διαίνετο χάλκεος ἄξων

... he took his golden whip, well-made, and mounted the platform of his chariot, and drove over the waves, and sea creatures played about beneath emerging from their lairs, nor did they fail to recognize their lord [*anakta*]. In gladness the sea parted and the horses flew fast and beneath the chariot the bronze axle did not moisten.¹⁵

Compare the associations of this scene of godly ease and control with the ritual of Poseidon at Onchestus, in which a *failure*, a chariot crash is commemorated. In the logic of divine-human relations that applies as well to the celebration of heroes in ancient Greece, the human element, even in failure, can stand as a signal token of the god's superhuman power and success. There is a power, a *mysterium tremendum* in Poseidon's grove. The ritual calls for a human to surrender control: even one who is a good driver (*elatêr agathos*, line 232) must leave his comfort zone, his place of special power and control. The charioteer then goes on the ground like his opposite, the foot soldier, while his horses and chariot continue without him. It is important that he is said to "leap" out of the chariot (233) in what must itself be a conspicuous display of courage and skill, as well as a useful maneuver for battle.¹⁶

The loss of control by the charioteer who jumps from his moving vehicle has a different meaning for a second category of participants in the rite, the horses (or perhaps at least one horse, the newly-trained colt).¹⁷ This horse, no longer driven, gets to draw breath (*anapneeî*). The diction is that which is used in the *Iliad* to describe the rare moment of refreshment that occurs for fighters in the heat of battle (e.g., *Iliad* 16.42, 18.200). Significantly, such moments in the *Iliad* are provided by the heroic fighting of others or by the intervention of a god (like Poseidon himself in Book 13). We could imagine this refreshing pause for the horse as a gift from its heroic human

¹⁵ On this scene and its congeners in epic, see Nagy 2009, 1§148.

¹⁶ Those with a West Coast, New Age religious bent will see precisely this gesture as spiritual wisdom, abandonment to the divine—probably not exactly what the Greek action signified. On another Californian note, I would compare the similar, albeit illegal, display of manhood known in some Oakland neighborhoods as "ghost-riding," in which tricked-out street-racers replace horse-drawn chariots, and drivers jump out of their moving cars.

¹⁷ For the debate over the number of horses involved, see Teffeteller 2001. I assume that the colt can be metonymic for the paired horses involved.

charioteer, as if from a fellow-fighter. Or, in a more competitive spirit, we can think of this as something the horses wrest from their controlling human master. Slightly in favor of the latter interpretation is the language of release: the horses proceed into the grove “casting off their lordship” (*anaktoriên aphientes*). The moment is one of liberation. One of the interesting further features of the ritual, whether we think collaboration or competition, is what happens with the now driverless chariot. As the poem says, “They rattle the empty chariot along.” The verb *kroteousin* has the sense of hitting (cf. the derived noun *krotala* “cymbals”), as if the horses are aggressively trying to lose the last vestige of the human culture that has been attached to them. On the one hand, to wax more abstract for a moment: we have the *phusis* of the horses, as it were on cruise control, without a human at the reins, but under the superhuman observation (or even control) of Poseidon. The god, I would argue, like the horses, is both symbol and embodiment of *phusis* “nature,” as contrasted with human *nomos* (“law, custom, habit”)—that is to say, all the arts, crafts, and technology that make culture possible. The artifice of humans is here abandoned almost on an experimental basis, or as a gamble, an odd sort of horse race.¹⁸ And the experiment, like the athletic event of leaping from the moving chariot, is in itself very modern sounding. It is, in brief, the ultimate crash test (without dummies). That is to say, the rattling, jostled, driverless car is subjected, through this yielding of *nomos* to *phusis*, to all of the unpredictable shocks and bumps that a new Volvo is given in a Swedish automobile-manufacturing torture chamber. As the poem continues, “if the chariot breaks in the wooded grove, on the one hand they take care of the horses, but on the other hand they leave it [the chariot] having tilted it up. For this was the holy rite at the very first. And they pray to the lord and then the portion/lot of the god [*moira*] guards the chariot.” There is no doubt that what we witness in the *Hymn to Apollo* is a long-standing ritual practice, within the very terms of the poem. While we do not know of the relationship in absolute terms of the establishment of Poseidon’s cult versus that of Apollo, in narrative terms, the brief digression places the one prominently before the other, just as Poseidon is older than his nephew Apollo. It is proper to note in this connection that chariot-rituals are crucial components of kingship inaugurations in ancient India and medieval Ireland, a commonality that argues for an Indo-European cultural practice underlying

¹⁸ Pindar *Isthmian* 1.32–33, 52–54 and *Isthmian* 4.19–23 imply that real horse-races were conducted at the shrine of Poseidon in Onchestus.

the whole complex.¹⁹ So the presentation (at least in poetic narrative) of the chariot-ritual along the young Apollo's way to his new seat of power may have significance as a marker of his own inaugural moment. In the immediate context of the Onchestus ritual, there is no explicit mention of kingship, it is true. And yet, as we noted, the poem's language recalls something not far from it. "Lordship" (*anaktoriê*) is the quality of being an *anax*. From Mycenaean texts, it appears that this term (in older form *wanax*), in fact, indicates a status higher than that of the "king" or *basileus* (appearing in Linear B as *qa-si-re-u*).²⁰ Dictionally, the charioteer is a (*w*)*anax* "lord" but so is the god, indicated, it appears, by (*w*)*anakti* ("to the lord") at line 237 (cf. *Iliad* 11.28 above, where *anakta*, also in line-final position, is referring to Poseidon). The now-abandoned chariot is in the god's field of control (*moira*: "lot" or "apportionment"). From the point of view of human culture, it has lost its usefulness and is left behind, but from the god's point of view, it is an acquisition, in the form of a dedication. The logic of sacrifice works the same way.²¹

The odd rite at Onchestus demands further unpacking, since we have not yet tackled the distinctive feature of this action sequence, the crash. What is signified in the dedication to the god of the unsuccessful vehicle? One might think of dedications as usually indicative of successful outcomes. For example, the small silver votive plaques clustered around almost every icon in a Greek Orthodox church are meant to show thanks to God, the

¹⁹ Teffeteller 2001 notes, in addition, Hittite and Babylonian analogues, one of which is quite specific in reference to an *empty* chariot in a god's precinct.

²⁰ On relative status of the two, see Shelmerdine 2008, 127–29 and 135. It is of interest that the lower-ranked *qa-si-re-u*, as she notes, is several times associated with work-groups of craftsmen, such as bronze-workers at Pylos. Could the later *basileus* have evolved from the "master" of a guild? Further bibliography at Salis 1996, 115–16.

²¹ A more radical possibility here, that at least deserves consideration, is that we should interpret (*w*)*anakti* to mean the *human* charioteer, whose *anaktoriê* has been mentioned a few lines before. From the perspective of later worshippers at Onchestus, he would be prayed to in his role as heroic warrior or celebrated king of the past, who had once subjected himself and his vehicle to Poseidon's rite. To say that "they pray" at the moment of dedication to a human would then blend the perspective of heroic age with that of the later worshippers in hero-cult. For a similar pairing of god and human hero in worship, see *Iliad* 11.761 (the conclusion of Nestor's initiatory raid): πάντες δ' εὐχετόωντο θεῶν Διὶ Νέστορί τ' ἀνδρῶν, "They all prayed to Zeus, among gods, and Nestor among men." Note that Nestor at the time is very much alive, having just completed a successful and spectacular feat in a chariot (jumping *onto* a vehicle and then taking fifty chariots of the enemy, 11.743–50). On Nestor's tale, see Chapter 4 above. In regard to initiatory chariot events, we should also keep in mind the elaborate race of *Iliad* 23, at Patroclus' funeral games, in which Antilochus the son of Nestor is a featured driver (see further Chapter 16 below). Klymenos, a mythical hero, is said to have died in a race at the grove (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 9.37.1); his heroic exemplum could be part of an unattested *aition* of the myth.

Virgin, and the saints for timely intervention in cases of illness, trouble, or want. Exactly the same dedicatory habit was ubiquitous in ancient Greek and Roman temples. One can still see the amazing array of models of human body parts dedicated at Corinth and read the testimonies of healings at Epidauros. In these cases, the dedicatory objects are visible expressions of needs met, or in some instance, of wants to be addressed in the future. But the broken chariot (basket, pole, and other gear: I take *diphron* as metonymic for the whole vehicle) is *not* like that. Rather than comparing it to the wheel-chairs and crutches that festoon the walls of Christian healing shrines from Lourdes to Knock, we can compare the chariot, leaning against the shrine wall, to notches on a gunslinger's belt or crosses on a fighter pilot's fuselage. They are victor's trophies, commemoration of power. Here the commemoration would be of Poseidon's power in contrast to human weakness. The logic of hero-cult applies, however. At the same time as the failure (in this case, of the driverless car) is displayed, the heroic leap may have been recalled (perhaps even in oral-traditional praises). A three-dimensional, dramatic rendition of a similar scene is available to us in the story of Hippolytus, the "horse-loosened," a grandson of Poseidon, recounted most memorably by Euripides (*Hippolytus* 1198–1248). He dies, tangled in the reins of his chariot that Poseidon caused to crash (in obedience to the wish of his son Theseus, father of Hippolytus). We can read his end as the consequence of *not* leaping in time. Yet his death shows the power of the god, and his devotion to at least one human, his son. And so, in the Onchestus ritual as presented in the *Hymn to Apollo*, Poseidon is granted the ultimate visible recognition of his superior skills at chariot control, through the dedication of uncontrolled and broken human vehicles.

Do these vehicles, however, really signify an oppositional stance? Is it a case of Poseidon Hippios, master of driving, showing up the would-be human masters of his art, who fail to control their chariots? Clearly not. Nor is it a story, like that of the young Pelops, of Poseidon protecting a driver and bringing him to success in a race.²² There *are* no drivers when it comes to the heart of this test. The *Hymn to Apollo*, instead, gives us a quite different scenario, involving a four-way multi-faceted *krisis* or "judgment under pressure." To recap the elements: we have, first, the presiding god to whom broken chariots will be dedicated (while presumably the unbroken vehicles escape being frozen in time as ritual objects in a shrine and instead continue

²² The story is told in an explicit hero-cult context in the epinician ode *Olympian* 1 of Pindar, for Hieron's victory of 476 BCE.

in human use). Second, we have a human driver who bails out, leaving his horses (the third element) to rattle and jostle his chariot, dragging it along uncontrolled. The fourth element now deserves mention: the chariot itself. The Greek *plurale tantum* noun *harmata* means literally “joinings.” The very notion focuses on construction (as if one were to call a car “car-parts”). If the crash-test of the ritual does not invoke successful driving, then what exactly is being tested, or in other words, what is subjected to the *krisis*? In a word: craft. Put simply, on display when the chariot enters the wooded grove of the god, whether to crash or survive intact, is the skill of whatever “joiner” (for which the Greek is *tektôn*, sharing a root with *tekhnê*) made the chariot, crafting its careful *harmata*. It is not impossible that the driver himself was that “joiner” (though he need not have been). He would thus not only race his own car, but show how good a car-maker he could be. Craftsmen—like the goldworker in Nestor's Pylos—are perfectly able to achieve independent epic commemoration.²³

The scenario I have sketched is not overt in the *Hymn*, which, we must admit, treats the whole rite in passing, as a sort of religiously inclined traveller's tale, based on learned local lore, like those found centuries later in Pausanias.²⁴ But it must have been obvious in the rite itself: the better-made chariot would not rattle into pieces. Preserved in the highly visible line of broken chariots is a sort of anti-victor list. One would like to know whether the dedications were anonymous or inscribed.²⁵ In any event, the string of damaged vehicles says silently to the god “you won,” even if it does not say overtly to the viewers “so-and-so lost.” Despite the somewhat unusual nature of the ritual, we must recognize in it a format that characterizes Greek art and craft for centuries. The “performance” of the highly crafted chariot (in our own sense of vehicle “performance”) is carried out:

²³ This construction skill may itself be a part of the expected heroic repertoire: see the *Iliad* in its several mentions of heroes (like Lykaon: 21.35–38) who are captured while cutting wood for their vehicles. In Irish saga, as well, the hero Cú Chulainn is thus represented, as are some of his enemies: see Bernhardt-House 2009. We should also remember that Epeius, maker of the Wooden Horse, is an Iliadic hero, not just a carpenter.

²⁴ On the characteristics of Pausanias' religious narratives, see Pirenne-Delforge 2008.

²⁵ Worth closer attention in this connection is the dedication by Arcesilas of his *winning* chariot at Delphi (in a cypress-grove), as commemorated by Pindar *Pythian* 5.34–42, who stresses how the victor did *not* break the “daidalic” work of the craftsmen who made his vehicle. I intend to take up this point in a later study.

1. in a religious setting;
2. involving an explicit or implicit contrast and contest with other performers (here, other chariots, driver-leapers, and carpenters);
3. for the ultimate purpose of glorifying a divinity; and,
4. in the process, providing implicit or explicit *criteria* (*kritêrion*, that which enables the *krisis*) whereby one can judge further performances.

This four-part definition of a craft-contest, based on an archaic poetic description of an obscure Boeotian ritual, will easily be seen to apply to the best-known aesthetic events from classical Athens: the musical, dramatic, and rhapsodic contests of the Panathenaea and Dionysia festivals, the soil from which our texts of Homer, Sophocles, Aristophanes, and hundreds of other (fragmentary) poets grew. Recitations of epic, the playing of pipe (*aulos*) and concert lyre (*kithara*), singing to these instruments, the staging of tragedy, comedy, satyr-play, and dithyramb—all fit into this format of “craft-contest.” (We even hear of “art” contests—in painting, for example—to which the format equally applies.²⁶) It may not be irrelevant, given this context, that the very medium of the Homeric hymn is known to be a contest-performance medium. The *Hymn to Apollo*, which preserves the fascinating Onchestus episode, may itself have been the result of a contest in rhapsodic hymn composition-in-performance. At the very least, as I have argued elsewhere, it can be interpreted to represent such a contest in a stylized way.²⁷ Ancient traditions about the life of Homer have him competing at Delos in the composition of a hymn to Apollo; some evidence even names Hesiod as his rival, and/or collaborator, in such a contest.

Now that we have uncovered in one small passage of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* the parameters and ideology of a small-scale, highly archaic contestation of aesthetic craft, it is time to turn to a second case-study, which examines, as it were, the ideology surrounding the other end of the process: the *criteria* and attitudes arising from an event dedicated to Poseidon’s sometime rival, Athena—the festival of the Panathenaea.

²⁶ On contests in painting and sculpture, see Hurwit 2015, 153–56. On the agonistic settings for Greek performance, see Martin 2015.

²⁷ See Chapter 7 below.

Apollo's Kithara

Apollo represents the ideal of a male who has passed through an initiatory period and appears at the height of his powers. We see this initiatory celebration and its aftermath, in compressed form, in the *Hymn to Apollo*.²⁸ The Homeric *Iliad* dramatizes the antagonism of this god (on the level of myth) to two humans who are (unfortunately for them) similar to him: the god-like Achilles and his beloved companion Patroclus.²⁹ But outside the world of heroic epic, Apollo's status is brought out, in typical ancient Greek fashion, through iconographic and poetic representations that evoke a structural juxtaposition of Apollo to another god, his younger half-brother and sometime rival, Hermes.

The field of their rivalry is a contestation-by-craft, taking place within the realm of the Muses, *mousikê*. A key component of the mythology surrounding Apollo is his involvement with singing, dancing, and playing string instruments. The lattermost, an extremely important aspect of Apolline musical culture, has most recently been meticulously explored and presented in the magnificent work of Timothy Power, *The Culture of Kitharôidia*, which covers just about everything connected to the art of singing to the *kithara* (forerunner, in word and artifact, of our "guitar").³⁰ I wish to examine just two moments in the ancient depiction of Apollo as a singer to this large stringed instrument.

Apollo the Citharode is more than just an incidental portrayal of the god with a proto-guitar. He is instead a mythic construction that benefited certain groups within archaic Greek culture. I consciously use these words, "myth" and "mythic" with an awareness of the usage, in the earliest surviving Greek poetic texts, of the word *mûthos*. As I have explained in an earlier work, the word *mûthos* in Homer does not immediately refer to what we might call myths—that is stories about gods and heroes—but rather to a particular kind of speech-act. It signals the use of speech when making a command, or a rebuke or a long act of remembrance. Put another way, a *mûthos* is, in the earliest usage, an utterance seeking authority, an assertion of identity, and

²⁸ On Apollo as initiator and initiated, see Burkert 1985, 260–64 and Graf 2009, 90–91.

²⁹ The god-hero antagonism at work is analyzed in detail by Nagy 1999b.

³⁰ Power 2010.

a strategic positioning.³¹ I believe that these same characteristics actually do continue into later usages of the word to mean something more like our modern word “myth.” We should not be misled by the apparent anonymity of “myths,” as they are so often presented in this later meaning. Every myth started as a *mûthos* by some person or persons, as a way to represent and manipulate the world.

I maintain that the *mûthos* of Apollo the Player (and Singer) stems from a method of self-presentation by the very performers who themselves transmitted “myths”—that is to say, actual human players and singers of epics and hymns. Their mythic self-presentation, or “mythologizing” of performance, can in turn be seen as regionally determined within Greek culture. In other words, the stories of Apollo the Citharode represent in large part a stylization of the type that is called “epichoric”—existing in a particular land.³² But the particular localization, as I shall argue, is that of a very specific *festival*, as opposed to the rites of other cult-centers (as was the case with Onchestus, above). We shall see that “criteria” for performance—the aesthetic notions that we might think universal—are in fact determined, and even over-determined, by highly local conditions. Any genealogy of modern aesthetics has to start with the *realia* of such localized rites.

Let us start with verbal art. The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, which gave us our first example, the rite of Poseidon at Onchestus, spends much more of its narrative proclaiming Apollo as the Citharode. After his mother, Leto, has convinced the island of Delos that acting as a divine maternity ward will be an economic benefit in future years, Delos makes the pregnant Leto swear an oath that Apollo will indeed build a glorious temple on the small rocky island (lines 51–92). In labor for nine days and nine nights, Leto grasps a palm tree, kneels on the ground, and, surrounded by nymphs and goddesses, brings forth the twins Apollo and Artemis. The young god is so powerful he bursts his swaddling bands. His first words in the poem proclaim his future areas of expertise (lines 131–32):

εἴη μοι κίθαρίς τε φίλη καὶ καμπύλα τόξα,
χρήσω δ' ἀνθρώποισι Διὸς νημερτέα βουλὴν.

³¹ Martin 1989, 10–88. On the later development of the word's semantics, in which it comes to approximate (but is not co-extensive with) more familiar meanings attached to the modern “myth,” see Martin 2013.

³² On the power of epichoric attachment in performance, see now Fearn 2011 and Boterf 2012.

May the *kithara* [or “*kithara*-playing”] be dear to me and the bent bow,
and I will utter to mortals the unerring will of Zeus.

He presents himself as one who can play a stringed instrument, called in the Greek of the poem, the *kitharis* (a by-form of the more common noun *kithara*). He will also be an archer and a prophet. I cannot enter here into the connection between the first two skills, music-making and archery, but it is most likely very old. Philippe Montbrun has recently shown in detail that the hunting bow and one-stringed musical instrument are, indeed, one and the same physical object among many peoples of Africa, South America, and Oceania.³³ As for the connections between musical performance and prophecy, the work of Lisa Maurizio and others has demonstrated that oral poetics has a key role in the production of prophetic hexameters at the Delphic oracle. It may even be the case that the Pythia, the prophetess of Apollo, spoke in verse.³⁴ In short, the three skills that Apollo professes might be thought of simply as three aspects of *one* powerful super-craft, a skill that boils down to *inerrancy*—whether of getting the right note in musical performance, the right target in athletic and martial performance, or the right prediction in talk of the future. Such an abstract but unifying concept should right away make us withhold judgment about the exact criteria for any one of those performances. It opens a world of strange possibility (from an aesthetic view): is a string-player better when he is more athletic, “bowing” with a vengeance, “hitting” the right notes precisely? Or when the music seems to us sweeter, more expressive, more moving and sensitive? We cannot assume that there is one correct, culturally transcendent answer.

The instrumental aspect is just one part of this craft of *citharody* (singing to the accompaniment of the *kithara*). But the choice of instrument to accompany song is, it turns out, a key signifier when it comes to drawing attention to such features as status, audience, occasion, and even the auditory volume of actual performances. We must, therefore, keep clear the distinction between *kithara* (or *kitharis*), and on the other hand, “lyre” (*lura*), which is often casually but misleadingly misapplied to the stringed instrument of Apollo. (Indeed, most translations of *Hymn to Apollo* line 131 write “lyre” for the Greek word *kitharis*.) It is worth emphasizing the differences between

³³ Montbrun 2001.

³⁴ Maurizio 2001. See, in addition, González 2013, 284–90, with further bibliography.

these ancient Greek stringed instruments, both in terms of their material construction and their semantic associations in broader cultural terms.³⁵

First, the *kithara*. This large seven-stringed instrument with a sizable wooden sound-box required physical strength to hold it up for any length of playing time.³⁶ In classical times, it was handled by professional musicians, often in the competitive environment of musical contests, at major festivals. Those festivals included, most conspicuously, the Pythian Games held at Apollo's shrine at Delphi. In relation to the *kithara*, I must first make some further observations on vocabulary, lest it be thought I am taking diction at face value in arguing that Apollo is, in a strictly technical sense, a *citharode*. Within the *Homeric Hymns*, one must admit, the terms used for instrumental playing are somewhat ambiguous. That is, one could argue that the noun *kitharis*, cited above (*Hymn to Apollo* 131), might be used in an unmarked way to mean *any* stringed instrument. It might even be used, as it is in most of the few occurrences in Homeric poetry, as a *nomen actionis* to mean "instrument-playing" rather than an instrument.³⁷ The noun *kithara* (rather than *kitharis*) is first attested in Theognis (line 778).³⁸ The default noun for the instrument that is played by singers in the Homeric epics is yet another term: *phorminx*.³⁹ In the *Hymn to Apollo*, this noun alternates with *kitharis*. Furthermore, the verbs derived from either noun, *phormizein* and *kitharizein* appear to be interchangeable.⁴⁰ All this means that the diction of hexameter

³⁵ For a parallel sociocultural analysis of the equally marked *aulos* (double-pipe), see Martin 2003b.

³⁶ On the instrument, see Comotti 1989, 63, and Maas and Snyder 1989, 53–78, with illustrations. On the endurance involved, see Power 2010, 52, 107, 121.

³⁷ As denoting an action rather than physical instrument in Homer, see *Iliad* 13.731 (paired with *aidê* "art of song," as gifts of a god). A similar pairing at *Iliad* 2.599–600 employs the suffixed noun form *kitharistus* to denote the art of playing (rather than the actual instrument) that the Muses took away from Thamyris along with his *aidê*, "art of song." More ambiguous are *Odyssey* 1.159, 8.248, and *Iliad* 3.54, where *kitharis* could be construed either as the instrument or as a metonym for the art of playing. Meanwhile, the noun as used at *Odyssey* 1.153 obviously denotes the actual instrument placed in the hands of the singer Phemius.

³⁸ In the context of paeon-performance for Apollo.

³⁹ It occurs twenty-one times in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in connection with just a few distinct performances, almost exclusively executed by professional musicians: by Apollo (two different occasions, *Iliad* 1.603 and 24.63); by Demodocus (sequence of three songs, *Odyssey* 8.67, 99, 105, 254, 261, 537; cf. 8.266 [verb *phormizôn*]); by Phemius (*Odyssey* 17.262, 270, 21.430, 22.332, 340, 23.133, 144; cf. 1.155 [verb *phormizôn*]); by Achilles (*Iliad* 9.186, 194); by an unnamed player at a Spartan wedding (*Odyssey* 4.18 [verb *phormizôn*]); in a simile, referring to a generic expert player (*Odyssey* 21.406); and in two celebrations on the Shield (*Iliad* 18.495 and 569, on which see below).

⁴⁰ Note especially *Iliad* 18.569–71 (describing a young man who plays and sings on the Shield of Achilles):

poetry has a good deal of flexibility in describing instrumental performance. The words “to play the *phorminx*” and “to play the *kithara*” can be taken in their semantically broad, unmarked sense, and in this way even applied to the playing of the small tortoise shell lyre—a completely different instrument. Or, the words can be taken in a semantically *narrow*, marked sense to mean precisely playing the larger, wooden box instruments, the *kithara* and its forerunner, the *phorminx*. Such flexibility proves useful as poets engage in mythologizing their own art-forms.

Let me also suggest that we may be seeing in this flexible system of descriptive terms the strata of generations of actual performance practices. In this connection I am reminded of an observation by the folklorist Dwight Reynolds, a scholar who has also undergone training as an Egyptian oral epic poet. He notes that even when a bard of the contemporary Hilali oral epic is obviously playing on a twentieth-century violin, with several strings, he says to his audience, in his verses, “I sing to you as I play on my *rabāb*”—although the *rabāb* is a much older, one-string instrument, clearly *not* what he is using in his act of performance. The text and the context, thus apparently dissonant, are seamlessly joined through the willing suspension of disbelief.⁴¹ And in fact, the fiddle does function, for poet and audience, as the spiritual and practical descendant of the *rabāb*. The *ideology* of traditional performance remains the same despite the practical upgrade and shift in the form of accompanying instrumentation.

As we return to the *Hymn to Apollo*, therefore, we should keep in mind that the poem might be describing either Apollo using a lyre, or Apollo using the professional contest instrument, the *kithara*. I shall contend that the *Hymn to Apollo* points to the latter scenario. In fact, the *kithara*—the big-box instrument—is for Apollo the *default* instrument. Another Homeric hymn, the *Hymn to Hermes*, as we shall see, insists on the latter scenario, his use of the *lyre*. It is this primeval contrast that will lead us to some

τοῖσιν δ' ἐν μέσσοισι πάϊς φόρμινγι λιγείη
 ἱμερόεν κίθαριζε, λίνον δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν αἶδε
 λεπταλέη φωνή

Conversely, Phemius' playing on the *kitharis* is described with the verb derived from the noun *phorminx* at *Odyssey* 1.153–55 (see note 38, above):

κῆρυξ δ' ἐν χερσὶν κίθαριν περικαλλέα θῆκε
 Φημίω, ὅς ῥ' ᾔειδε παρὰ μνηστῆρων ἀνάγκη.
 ἦ τοι ὁ φορμίζων ἀνεβάλλετο καλὸν αἶδειν ...

⁴¹ On this reference to the older instrument, see Reynolds 1989, 67; for detailed study of the Hilali performance tradition see Reynolds 1995.

conclusions about the mythic meanings of kithara vs. lyre in terms of performance practices, social semiotics, and aesthetics.

In order to explore the further implications of Apollo as a player and singer, a citharode, let us start with the following lines (*Hymn to Apollo* 156–64):⁴²

There is also a great wonder the fame of which will never perish,
the Delian maidens, the servants of the far-shooter.
Who, after first hymning Apollo
and then in turn Leto and arrow-pouring Artemis,
commemorating men and women of old
sing a hymn and enchant the races of humans.
The voices and the rhythmic patterns of all humans
they know how to represent; each one might think
that he himself is speaking, so beautifully is their song fitted
together.

The immediate context is a description of the Ionian festival at Delos in honor of Apollo. Along with other events, it includes, in the poet's rendition, a chorus of maidens of Delos who charm the assembled festival crowd on the sacred island with their astounding vocal performance. The speaker of the *Homeric Hymn* at this point appears to introduce himself, as well as a second man, a foil figure. Bidding the Delian maidens farewell, just after these lines, the speaker says: "If a stranger should ask, 'Who for you is the sweetest of singers frequenting this place, in whom do you take most delight?' tell him this: —'A blind man, he lives in rocky Chios. That man's songs, all of them, are best ever after'" (lines 168–73). This scripted response seems to be an artful if rather indirect self-advertisement on the part of the performing poet. In the form in which it is scripted for the Delian maidens, it resembles a contract: the parties are marked out by the contrasting line-initial *humeis* and *hêmeis* ("you" plural and "we"). "*You* give this answer," says the anonymous speaker, "and *we* in turn will spread your poetic fame [*kleos*] as far as we wander on earth to the well-peopled cities of men. And I will never cease to praise far-shooting Apollo, god of the silver bow, whom rich-haired Leto bore."

Since the time of Thucydides, this passage from the *Hymn to Apollo* has been taken as evidence for the history of performance practices. Most often, the mysterious blind man of Chios has been interpreted as a reference to

⁴² See most recently on the exact interpretation of these lines, Peponi 2009, with further bibliography. The translation given here is hers (2009: 67n74).

the figure of Homer. What is not always stressed is the open-ended wording of these lines: there is no direct assertion that the speaker of the *Hymn to Apollo* is, in fact, the same as the *tuphlos anêr*, the blind man. The identity of the hymn performer is instead elided—we are meant to *associate* him with Homeric traditions, with all who have ever wandered around performing songs of Homer, but it may or may not be “Homer” who speaks to the Delians.⁴³

I would add that the Homer figure here most closely resembles that of the wandering poet found in the *Lives of Homer* and in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*. These traditional stories appear to go back to the sixth century BCE, a time when the texts of the poems of Homer and Hesiod were being crystallized and set down in some form or other. As we see Homer mythologized in those traditions, he represents a much more expansive repertoire than the composer of our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The Homer of the *Lives of Homer* stories composes curses, magical spells, epigrams, and hymns, as well as what we might call epic. He comes into town and gets himself advertised, stays at cobblers shops or men's gathering spots, even makes up small-scale epics about the history of the city in which he finds himself. The Homer of the *Lives* traditions is an ornery character as well, who will curse a town if he feels that he has been disrespected—in good poetic fashion of course.⁴⁴ Now, if we acknowledge that the speaker of the ancient *Hymn to Apollo* associates himself with such an expansive, multi-generic repertory for the poetry of Homer—from curses to praise poems to epigrams and spells—the next claim in my argument becomes a bit more likely: namely, that the performer of our *Hymn to Apollo* himself wants to pose as a *citharode*—or, at least, to strongly suggest the possibility. This might be surprising since it is clear that the Homeric hymns as a group must have been *rhapsodic* compositions meant for competitive recitation, like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in their sixth-century formats.⁴⁵ By “rhapsodic,” I mean recited, without musical accompaniment or melody. We have a picture of such recitation in the dialogue of Plato titled *Ion*, after the wandering rhapsode or “song-stitcher” of that name. Ion the rhapsode goes from place to place competing as a reciter of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Let me stress the difference once more. Our evidence for actual

⁴³ For the fullest recent treatment, taking into account earlier discussions, see Sbardella 2012, 34–36 and 85–99.

⁴⁴ On the *Lives* and Homer's technique as wandering poet, see Martin 2009 and Nagy 2010, 29–47.

⁴⁵ On the variety of performance contexts for the *Homeric Hymns*, see Clay 2011b; on *Hymns* specifically in rhapsodic performance, see Collins 2001b.

performance of Homeric poetry and, by extension, *Homeric Hymns*, tells us that they were *recited* in competitions, not *sung*. Yet the internal picture given us by the *Hymn to Apollo* suggests that the composer of such poetry is a *singer*, specifically a *citharode* or singer to the kithara.

What are the signs of this hymnist's imagined citharody? Most clearly, it comes in what I shall call "emblematic melding." To explain this, I refer to another passage. Several critics have noted that the transition in line 177 and following of the hymn is abrupt.⁴⁶ Most attribute this to an alleged gap or seam between the so-called Delian and Pythian parts of the *Hymn*. It is true that the first part of the *Hymn to Apollo* dwells on the career of the young god near the time of his birth on Delos, while the second highlights his acquisition of Delphi as a place for a temple from which to issue oracles. Since the eighteenth century, critics have insisted that the *Hymn to Apollo* is, in fact, two poems clumsily stuck together, one originally designed for performance on Delos, the other for performance at Delphi. I do not believe this explanation.⁴⁷ At any rate, in the passage at hand, after promising to spread the fame of the Delian maidens, the speaker—who previously referred to himself with a plural pronoun *hêmeis*—says at line 177, "but I [*singular* pronoun] will not cease making a *humnos* about far-shooting Apollo." He then makes good on his claim, breaking into what we can identify as high-style hymnic rhetoric in the Greek poetic tradition (*Hymn to Apollo* 179–93):

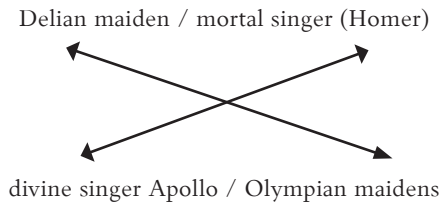
O Lord, Lycia is yours and lovely Maeonia and Miletus, charming city by the sea, but over wave-girt Delos you greatly reign your own self. Leto's all-glorious son goes to rocky Pytho, playing upon his hollow lyre, clad in divine, perfumed garments; and at the touch of the golden key his lyre sings sweet. Thence, swift as thought, he speeds from earth to Olympus, to the house of Zeus, to join the gathering of the other gods; then straightway the undying gods think only of the lyre and song, and all the Muses together, voice sweetly answering voice, hymn the unending gifts the gods enjoy and the sufferings of men, all that they endure at the hands of the deathless gods, and how they live witless and helpless and cannot find healing for death or defense against old age.

In this miniature praise section, the very first image the poet offers us is, significantly, of Apollo, seen in all his glory as *citharode*. Not only are both the mortal and divine hymnists juxtaposed in this manner. The description interconnects details, as well. We see Apollo as he strides toward an assembly

⁴⁶ Opinions given in Càssola 1975, 498.

⁴⁷ For my alternative view, see Chapter 7 below.

of the gods (*homêgurin*), surely a match for the picture we have just seen of the Homeric poet, the blind man of Chios, as travelling around. Both man and god are hymnists on the move. The epiphany of Apollo on Olympus prompts divine delight in *kitharis* and *aoidê*, instrumental playing and singing, and leads to further song and dance among the gods. That comes in a description that many have observed closely replicates the features of the human musical events on Delos mentioned earlier in the poem.⁴⁸ In the earlier passage, the poem refers to the gathering of Greeks from all over the islands and adjacent coast, and speaks of how they are transfixed by the virtuoso performance of a set of human girls who can imitate the voices and movements of all.⁴⁹ Schematically, we have a chiasmus:



The emblematic melding here accomplishes in almost tactile fashion the sort of analogizing by which myth as a whole functions. The assertion embedded in this juxtaposition is: just as Apollo is *Musagetês*, leader of the *Muses*, so the blind man of Chios—or his representative—is choral leader of the *Delian* chorus, the one who provides them with songs. This matching detail is further underlined by the line-final occurrence of the word for song, *aoidê* at 173 (referring to “Homer”) and at 188 (referring to Apollo). To repeat, no matter what the actual performance conditions were over the years for this *Hymn to Apollo*—including recitation in performance, without music of any kind—the text itself insinuates that the *Hymn to Apollo* is exactly like Apollo’s *own* song. Let me put it more pointedly: the human singer worships the god by modeling himself on this divine patron of song.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Clay 1989, 53–56; cf. Power 2010, 442–43.

⁴⁹ On the meaning of the “imitation,” see now Peponi 2009.

⁵⁰ The late-antique lexicon of Hesychius yields some surprising and remarkably detailed information about what appear to be actual performance habits from an earlier period. The lexicon tells us that the phrase “But, lord ...” (*all’anax*) was known to be a conventional closing phrase, or *exodion*, within the performances of actual *citharodes*. By contrast, the phrase “But now the gods” functioned as an *exodion*, or signoff phrase, for *rhapsodes*. I submit that we see exactly this closing strategy, but in a split-up and expanded version at lines 177–79 of the *Hymn to Apollo*. Here the poet says *autar ego*—(compare *alla* of the *exodion*) and then says *o ana* (compare *anax* of the *exodion*). See

There is one further emblematic melding to examine in the Apollo hymn. As the poem proceeds, Apollo realizing the need for priests for his newly founded temple in Delphi, goes out and hijacks a boat. Specifically, he takes the form of a dolphin, leaps into a ship manned by Cretan sailors and proceeds to flop around and rock it. While Apollo the Dolphin lies there, the boat starts steering itself toward the place he desires (388–439). When it reaches his goal, Apollo resumes his divine form and tells the Cretans they will be his servants. He then leads them in a high-spirited but formal procession up the mountain to his shrine, playing his *phorminx* as he goes (452–516). The Cretans follow, singing a victory song or *paeon* “just like the *paeans* of the Cretans, for whom the Muse has placed in the heart honey-voiced song” (518–19). If the hymnist of this poem is being likened to Apollo, so the Cretan sailors—his newly found priests—are likened to Cretan *paeon* singers. The victory song or thanksgiving song to Apollo called the *paeon* was normally sung to the *kithara*. By mythic calculation, the hymnist of the *Hymn to Apollo* is like Apollo who in turn is like the leader of Cretan *citharode* singers. Hence once again, the *Hymn* performer comes out looking like a *citharode*. I shall return to the Cretans in a moment, in formulating my final thoughts about the role of ritual and contest in developing the aesthetics of performances.

For now, we should note that this very artful and careful merging of performers within the *Hymn to Apollo* gains even more resonance when placed next to the evidence from iconography and literary-historical traditions. A key to this broader complex is the lore passed down to us by the second-century CE travel writer Pausanias. In his section on the Pythian games, we must note several key points. Before the reorganization of the Pythian games in the sixth century BCE, as we learn from other sources, the only contest was in citharody. Pausanias says this took the form of singing a hymn to Apollo. The first winner was Chrysothemis of Crete. The passage is worth quoting in full:

The oldest contest and the one for which they first offered prizes was, according to tradition, the singing of a hymn to the god. The man who sang and won the prize was Chrysothemis of Crete, whose father Carmanor is said to have cleansed Apollo. After Chrysothemis, says tradition, Philammon won with a song, and after him his son Thamyras. But they say that Orpheus, a proud man and conceited about his mysteries, and

Hesychius A 3113 (Latte); and cf. Gostoli 1990, 54, 146–48. For extensive analysis of this usage, see Chapter 6 below.

Musaeus, who copied Orpheus in everything, refused to submit to the competition in musical skill.

They say too that Eleuther won a Pythian victory for his loud and sweet voice, for the song that he sang was not of his own composition. The story is that Hesiod too was debarred from competing because he had not learned to accompany his own singing on the harp. Homer too came to Delphi to inquire about his needs, but even though he had learned to play the harp, he would have found the skill useless owing to the loss of his eye-sight.⁵¹

There are a number of fascinating and relevant aspects to Pausanias' collection of observations on Delphic performance history. We can note, first, how the character and biography of various "authors" are obviously tied to the local traditions about whether or not they were fit to participate in a particular event. Thus Orpheus and Musaeus are too proud, Hesiod too unskilled in music, and Homer, paradoxically, skilled but unable to make use of his skill due to blindness—which sounds like a crudely manufactured excuse.

We should note further that Chrysothemis, the first victor, had a living connection with Apollo, since his father had performed *katharsis* for the god. The ritual context, therefore, is doubled—the citharode sings a hymn *and* is the son of one who provided ritual cleansing. By the way, the very name Chrysothemis or "Golden Rule" would make an appropriate epithet for the god himself. In the *Hymn to Apollo*, the baby god is resplendently dressed in gold, with gold belt and gold dagger. The very first divinity to feed the baby Apollo is not his mother Leto, but instead the goddess *Themis*—"Proper Rule, or Custom." She gives him nectar and ambrosia—the perfect pabulum for an immortal (lines 123–24). What I am suggesting is that calling oneself "Chrysothemis" in the context of Apolline cult and festival evokes images of the very origin of the god Apollo. Let us add to Pausanias' information at this point a further piece of lore. According to a tradition passed down by the Byzantine scholar Photius (*Bibliotheca* 320b), this mortal singer Chrysothemis was the first to wear expensive clothing and to take up the *kithara* to sing a solo *nomos* or traditional song-pattern in *imitation* of Apollo (*eis mimêsin Apollonos*). The anecdote is nothing less than an aetiological story to explain the customary dress of both competitive citharodes and their instruments (also by the way, elaborately clothed, as we shall see).⁵²

⁵¹ Pausanias *Description of Greece* 10.7.3; trans. W. H. S. Jones.

⁵² See further Power 2010, 28–29.

The other points in Pausanias' passage are all worth pondering, but we must pass quickly over them. Essentially, this lore retrojects a division of repertoires, perhaps originating in the sixth century BCE. The Pythian games tradition of competitive singing to the accompaniment of the kithara, interestingly, includes in its list of victors (and thus, in the contemporary repertoire) Philammon, Eleuther, and best of all the mythic performer Thamyras, who, the *Iliad* tells us, was once defeated by the Muses in a contest (*Iliad* 2.591–600).⁵³ But it *excludes* Orpheus, Musaeus, Homer, and Hesiod. These latter, it can be argued, are all to be associated with *rhapsodic* performance, although the passage does not state this. In stressing Homer's skill at playing an instrument, and then veering away from this by excluding him, the Pythian lore seems to mirror inversely what the *Hymn to Apollo* presents: a *citharodic*, singing-and-playing Homer, in the actual context of a *rhapsodic* hymn. It is as if the keepers of Pythian lore, perhaps the priests and operators of the games, acknowledge a tradition of Homeric citharody, but take pains to reject it. Within the terms of the Pythian lore reported by Pausanias, such a rejection would make most sense if citharodic ideology—collaborating with the rules of the games, as set by Apollo's proponents—*requires* from its performers the ability to *see* the god in order to proclaim his glory—you do not acquire such details from what other people tell you. You must see for yourself.⁵⁴

Let me return to the essential conclusion we can draw from the passages we have just reviewed. The origin myths and ideology of citharodic performance at the games in Delphi, the Pythian games, pivot around imitating the god *in his role as citharode*. The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, as I am suggesting, promotes that very ideology, although it seems that the Pythian contests *excluded* from competition all that was considered to be Homeric poetry—yet another indication of how what were primarily ritual events shaped the very canon of Greek literature.⁵⁵ At this point, we could expatiate on the function of such divine mimesis. It seems to have played a specific role within the broader area of male initiation. In this connection, we need to recall that Apollo is the god of clan membership, as attested especially in Dorian lands (like Crete) but also in Athens. As a young god, with characteristic long hair,

⁵³ For the competing traditions at work in this myth, see Martin 1989, 29–30 and Wilson 2006–07.

⁵⁴ An analogy might be made with the powerful force of *darśan*—pious religious viewing of the sites and images of gods—in Hinduism, on which see Eck 1998.

⁵⁵ In the sixth century BCE, the corpus of “Homeric” verse was certainly much more extensive than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and *Hymns*, and included large portions of what was later called “Cyclic” poetry: Nagy 2010, 69–78.

he is the embodiment of that stage in a young man's life when he is called an ephebe—"on the verge of full youth." Apollo does not get old; he remains the eternal ephebe. To be a full man, the mortal Greek passes through the ephebic stage, learning the craft of the warrior, but also learning the other relevant skills of being an aristocratic male. These skills include the production of music and song—embodied in Apollo the Citharode. This whole ancient Greek social-mythic complex can be characterized in the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld's phrase, as the "Poetics of Manhood"—to borrow the title of his important book about the late-twentieth century inhabitants of an upland village in western Crete.⁵⁶

And now it's time for us to talk further of Cretans. It must not be accidental that the first citharodic winner, a generation after the god himself, according to the ancient lore, was from Crete. I submit that the reason Apollo in the mythic narrative preserved in the *Hymn to Apollo* has to choose *Cretan* merchant pirates to be his priests is simply because the traditions and lore concerning *actual* citharodic performance at Delphi have pre-determined that ethnicity to be the operative one. The stories and practices of real performers, in other words, have moved quietly into the *mythic* representations, retrojecting a number of details from the present age, about what singers really do (or their own stories about what they do), into a distant Golden Age. Nor should we be disturbed by the odd combination of priests and singers in this picture—the mythic Cretan sailors becoming sacrificial officiants at Apollo's temple, while the Cretan performers are good at singing. At Delphi, as at Athens, where the Eumolpidae or "good-singer" family had ritual functions, and further afield, in the cults and poetic traditions of Vedic India, priests and singers are quite often one and the same persons.⁵⁷

Two semi-historical figures can help fill in the picture that I have been drawing of the ideology of "emblematic melding." Terpander, a citharode from Lesbos, who flourished around 680 BCE, established the first citharodic contest at the Carneia in Sparta—and proceeded to win the contest.⁵⁸ Since the Carneia was a long-standing Apollo festival, we see once again the close relation between citharody and the god. But in the stories that tell us how Terpander invented the seven-string lyre, and the set of tunes to be sung

⁵⁶ Herzfeld 1985. On Apollo, poetry, and initiatory practices, see Johnston 2013, who highlights the god's paradigmatic role in the *Hymn to Hermes*. On musical components of Apolline training, in festival contexts, see Pettersson 1992.

⁵⁷ Eumolpidae: Graf 1974, 59–65, 93–100; Vedic India: Winternitz 1981, 150–55.

⁵⁸ Pseudo-Plutarch *De musica* 1131a–1132e; Gostoli *ad loc.* 1990, 84–85.

to the kithara, we see also the melding of human musician with divine. For Apollo, too, is a first-founder, discoverer of institutions and inventor of *nomoi* in several senses. (The word *nomoi* can mean both “tunes” and “laws”).⁵⁹ The second figure, whose names is Thaletas or Thales, is a sort of shamanic alternative to Terpander; the traditional dating puts him, too, in the seventh century BCE, when he is credited with founding another Spartan institution, the Gymnopaedia.⁶⁰ Thaletas or Thales also is said to have prevented war or cured plague with his songs, which included paeans and a kind of processional song call *huporkhêma*.⁶¹ If Terpander imitates the divine model Apollo in his innovations, Thaletas does so by his healing and harmonizing activities. Looked at another way, both of these historical citharodic biographies reflect the emblematic melding of performer and patron. What is more, Thaletas comes from an interesting town (one that we associate with one of the earliest surviving Greek law codes on stone): Gortyn, in southern Crete.

The literary evidence about Apollo as citharode is dwarfed by the visual, which would require a long book and a good deal of art-historical expertise to analyze in full.⁶² Let me summarize for the sake of brevity: from a sample data set comprising the 536 vases for which the online Beazley archive at Oxford provided images in a keyword search, as well as the *Lexicon Iconographicum* section on Apollo with kithara, it emerges that the kithara accompanies Apollo in a fairly restricted set of scenes—ones that are ritual, public, and celebratory.⁶³ The god plays in processions, especially divine weddings, like that depicted on a well-known sixth-century *dinos* by Sophilos.⁶⁴ Apollo also plays at altars flaming for sacrifice, or during libations; and Apollo leads the Muses in song. Such type-scene attestations capture the marked nature of public performance on this instrument, the very same marked and ritually grounded performance that one sees in the human citharodic contests at the Carneia and the Pythia. A related point is that Apollo himself in vase depictions looks like a human citharode contestant, and vice versa. We

⁵⁹ Power 2010, 215–23 has an extended discussion of the multiple meanings of *nomos*.

⁶⁰ The name of the festival, at least, is familiar to the modern world through the music of Erik Satie, *Les Gymnopédies*; see Pettersson 1992.

⁶¹ Barker 1984, 214–16.

⁶² On statues of Apollo Citharode, see Flashar 1992. On vase depictions, see now Power 2010, 249, 286–87, 425–30. A slightly fuller version of the visual evidence is in Martin 2010, from which I have borrowed some material for this portion of the current essay.

⁶³ *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* 2:1 (1984) 199–213 (#82–238).

⁶⁴ British Museum 1971.11–1.1.

have established the close “emblematic melding” of human citharodes and divine player. I have argued that this goes back to the actual practices and ideology of the citharodes, specifically in the contest situation at Delphi, in the Pythian games. Now is the time to turn at last to a third place, triangulating, as it were, between Apollo's sites of Delphi and Delos, and the aesthetics of its contests, and those honoring another divinity, Athena, in the Panathenaea. I will take a slight detour, however, reaching Athens through Arcadia, at least in mythic terms.

A companion poem to the *Hymn to Apollo* is the hymnic composition that celebrates the birth and adventures of his half-brother, the god Hermes. While we cannot dwell on the *Hymn to Hermes* at the same length as Apollo's hymn, it is worth noticing how the poem embodies a suggestive and discordant transgression against Apolline harmonies. The *Hymn to Hermes* is a comic masterpiece, a rags-to-riches tale, telling how the god's mother Maia gave birth to him in a cave far distant from the house of his father Zeus. Soon after being born, Hermes decides to steal the cattle of his brother Apollo. Cattle-raiding, like being skilled at chariot-driving, is known as an ancient form of proving manhood, connected with initiation stories in Greek, Indic, and Irish.⁶⁵ In the world of modern Crete—as Michael Herzfeld's book shows in detail—it has been replaced as an initiatory experience by the stealing of sheep from one's older male neighbors, fulfilling a key function in the Poetics of Manhood.⁶⁶

So the *Hymn to Hermes*, in its basic plot, enacts a transgression, with a baby doing the deed of a young man, not unlike the way Apollo himself, in the *Hymn* dedicated to him, is instantly depicted as maturing. Yet the *Hymn to Hermes* goes a step further. Not only is it about a legal and ritual transgression (Hermes, in fact, invents a new kind of sacrifice: lines 110–36); it also encapsulates a musical transgression. After being caught and threatened with punishment by his older brother, Hermes charms Apollo by singing a hymn to the gods while accompanying himself on his own invention, the tortoise-shell lyre (*Hymn to Hermes* 418–33).⁶⁷

⁶⁵ See Walcot 1979 and Melia 1979. Note that the biography of Nestor, as recounted by him at *Iliad* 11.670–761, tells of a cattle-raid followed by a battle in which Nestor seizes an opponent's chariot and, using it, cuts down 100 enemies in the fray; see further Chapter 4 above.

⁶⁶ Haft 1996 makes use of Herzfeld 1985 to illuminate the *Hymn to Hermes*.

⁶⁷ Translation from West 2003a, 147–49. For full analysis of the aesthetic being espoused here, see Peponi 2012.

Having taken it on his left⁶⁸ arm, he tried it out with a plectrum in a tuned scale, and it rang out impressively under his hand; and Phoibos Apollo laughed for pleasure, the lovely sound of its wondrous voice invaded his senses, and sweet longing captivated his heart as he listened. Playing delightfully on the lyre [λύρη δ' ἔρατὸν κιθαρίζων], the son of Maia stationed himself unafraid on Phoibos Apollo's left, and soon, with the lyre's clear accompaniment [λυγέως κιθαρίζων], he was striking up his song, and his voice came lovely: he spoke authoritatively of the immortal gods and of dark Earth, how they were born originally and how each received his portion. Remembrance first of the gods he honored in his song, the mother of the Muses, for she had Maia's son in her province, and then the rest of the immortal gods Zeus' splendid son honored according to seniority and affiliation, relating everything in due order, and playing the lyre that hung from his arm [ὑπωλένιον κιθαρίζων].

Before proceeding further, we should note at this point that the word "lyre" is used just once (line 423), while further references to the instrument (lines 425 and 433) simply use the line-final participle *kitharizôn*. West's translation here (and those of others) seeks to clarify and supplement the text by intruding "lyre" into each of the latter two references, but it is more important, for my argument, that any noun that would specify the instrument is actually suppressed. We understand the object to be "lyre," but the sense is carried along by the poet's choice of the ambiguous term that means, literally, "playing as on a kithara" but (as we have seen above) can mean more neutrally "strum."

After Apollo expresses his amazement at this novel form of music-making, asking what the *tekhnê* ("craft, skill") and *mousa* (either "Muse" or "type of music") might be (line 447), he reminds Hermes of his own involvement in song and dance as a follower of the Muses (lines 450–54), but significantly, makes no mention of his kithara-playing abilities, which are so prominent in the *Hymn to Apollo*.⁶⁹ Indeed, his astonishment seems to imply that stringed instrument playing, the art of the *kithara*, has not yet been invented. Therefore, it is something of a jolt when Apollo refers to Hermes' lyre-playing using the verb derived from the noun *kithara* (455):

⁶⁸ Note that the object-noun is omitted altogether: some editors (e.g., Càssola [1975, 536] and others there cited) replace the transmitted reading *labôn* ("having taken") with the name of an instrument, either *lurên* or *kitharin*, but I believe that the text of 418, as it stands with its direct object elided, is exactly right.

⁶⁹ The only instrument mentioned is the double-pipe, *auloi*, at line 452.

θαυμάζω, Διὸς υἱέ, τὰδ' ὥς ἐρατὸν κιθαρίζεις.

Once more, West's translation, intruding the noun "lyre," seeks to avoid any possible cognitive dissonance prompted by the verb:

I am amazed, son of Zeus, how beautifully you can *play such things*
on the lyre.

Further blurring of the referent occurs in the scene of exchange that soon follows. Hermes graciously allows Apollo to practice his own invention, while craftily implying that Apollo might in return instruct him in the prophetic arts (lines 464–73; again, there is no mention of pre-existing Apolline musical knowledge):

You can help yourself to the knowledge you want. But as your heart is set on playing the lyre [θυμὸς ἐπιθύει κιθαρίζειν], play it [κιθάριζε], make music [μέλπεο], and be festive, accept it from me; and you, dear friend, give me prestige [κῦδος] in turn.

What I have called "dissonance" continues: handing over the lyre so that his half-brother can try it, Hermes refers, twice, to the act of playing it using the verb *kitharizein*. When Apollo takes it, a peculiar transformation occurs, as can best be seen by juxtaposing West's normalizing translation with the odder Greek original. The key phrases are highlighted below (lines 496–502):

With these words *he held out the lyre* [ὧς εἰπὼν ὥρεξ'] and Phoibos Apollo took it; and he willingly handed Hermes the shining goad and enjoined on him the care of cattle, which Maia's son accepted gladly. Then, *taking the lyre* [κίθαριν δὲ λαβών] on his left arm, Leto's glorious son, the far-shooting lord Apollo, tried it out with a plectrum in a tuned scale, and it rang out enchantingly below, while the god sang beautifully to its accompaniment.

As can be easily seen, in the first phrase the object-noun has been gapped out: the Greek says simply "So speaking he held out," in line with a strategy of avoidance we have now seen earlier (cf. line 418). But, more disturbingly, in the second highlighted phrase that object that the audience has known to be a lyre is explicitly named *kitharis* (an equivalent to *kithara*). In other words, the instrument has undergone a metamorphosis, at least at the verbal level, from lyre to *kithara/kitharis*. To complicate the picture even more, a third term occurs in the next lines describing the now reconciled gods as they approach Zeus (505–6):

Zeus' two beautiful children themselves went prancing back to snowy Olympus, entertaining themselves *with the lyre* [τερπόμενοι φόρμιγγι].

West translates it as “lyre”—in accord with the drift of the poem’s action thus far—but the noun in question is *phorminx*. As we have seen, this noun regularly is correlated with professional playing and with the forms *kithara*/*kitharis*/*kitharizô*, in the Homeric epics.⁷⁰

In the poem’s remaining two references to the tortoise-shell instrument, formerly owned by Hermes, it is called *kitharis* (lines 509, 515). In short, the same instrument takes on a different identity depending on the god who plays it: a lyre for Hermes, a kithara for Apollo.

As if to underline the metamorphosis of lyre to kithara, Hermes on handing over the instrument delivers an extended piece of advice to Apollo (lines 478–88) that relies on a crucial verbal transformation, a metaphor in which the lyre is fully equated with a female companion (*hetaira*):

Be a fine musician, fondling this clear-voiced girl friend [λιγύφωνον ἑταίρην] who knows how to talk fine and fittingly. Take her confidently to the banquet [δαῖτα θάλειαν] and the lovely dance [χορὸν ἱμερόεντα], and the bumptious revel a source of good cheer day and night. If one questions her with skill and expertise, she speaks all kinds of lessons to charm the fancy, easily tickled [ἄθυρομένη] with tender familiarity, avoiding tiresome effort. But if a novice questions her roughly, then she will utter useless, discordant rubbish.

This fanciful conceit, in turn, brings to mind the earlier episode in the *Hymn to Hermes* centering on the infant god’s crafting of the lyre by killing a tortoise and making its shell into a sound box (lines 22–59). There are parallels between the diction used by Hermes when seducing the tortoise into his cave, and that which he later uses to instruct Apollo about the proper handling of the female *organon* that the tortoise became at his hands (31–32):

Hello, my lovely, my dance-beat dinner companion, welcome apparition! [χαίρε φνὴν ἑρόεσσα χοροῖτύπε δαιτὸς ἑταίρη]
Where did you get this fine plaything [τόδε καλὸν ἄθυρμα] this blotchy shell that you wear, you tortoise living in the mountains?

I would argue that such seemingly dissonant shifting, through which the tortoise-shell lyre is so markedly transformed into a *kithara*, is at the heart of this composition, directing the audience toward the poem’s striking

⁷⁰ See above, especially footnotes 40–41.

theological and musical assertion: that without Hermes, Apollo would never have learned his famous art. To repeat: in the *Hymn to Apollo*, the god was clearly depicted as a citharode, as we have seen. Playing on the large concert instrument, the *kithara*, is his special sphere of action, declared at birth. Yet the *Hymn to Hermes* conspicuously represents Apollo as completely taken with an attraction to the *lyre* and to the art of intimate song accompanied by this smaller, lighter instrument. Why does the *Hymn to Hermes* show Apollo acquiring from his thievish younger brother not the *kithara* (his canonical instrument) but rather a *lyre*?

As is well illustrated by images on vases, as well as from surviving archaeological remains, kitharas are to lyres as concert harps are to banjos. There is a considerable difference between them in the practicalities of playing, but even more in the semiotic associations of the two stringed instruments. The latter, in fact, can be aligned in terms of a structural opposition that I shall now attempt to articulate.

The tortoise-shell lyre represents a set of associations very much on the surface in the *Hymn to Hermes*, associations that are opposed to those accompanying the *kithara*. Take, for example, the passages that describe the first song-performance of the infant Hermes. He strikes up the instrument and then sings to it in accompaniment “trying things out on the basis of improvisation (*ex autoskhediês*, line 55). We know, however, that singing to the *kithara* in actual contests required the playing of set patterns or *nomoi*.⁷¹ One did not just pick up a *kithara* and improvise, at least not in the most frequent situations that called for kithara-playing: when praising the god, competing in contests (either of singing to kithara or of kithara playing, solo), or accompanying sacrifice. Furthermore, whereas Apollo's followers sing the formal and public genre of *paeans* in the hymn praising him (the kind that Cretans are famous for), Hermes' song instead resembles the improvised off-hand insult contests of young men at feasts (*Hymn to Hermes* 55–56).⁷² The association of the lyre with eating, dancing, and the type of woman who attends parties (*hetaira*) could hardly be more marked: at the major poetic transformation points, as we have just observed (tortoise to lyre, lyre to *hetaira*), the same images are highlighted. Finally, the content of Hermes' song is purely autobiographical. The baby singer gives us a first-person view of his

⁷¹ Power 2010, 500–6.

⁷² The informality and bantering tone remind me of another modern Cretan parallel, the duels between men (and sometimes women) who compose rhyming-couplets called *mandinadhes*. Such informal contests can arise in any number of situations: see Martin 2017.

environment, including maids and pots (*Hymn to Hermes* 46–62). This might remind us of another sort of ancient Greek poetry, the often obscene, highly personalized verse attributed to Archilochus, the soldier-poet from the island of Paros. Perhaps it is not accidental that Archilochus was said to have been initiated into poetry as a young man by some sarcastic Muses whom he met on the road, and who gave him, in return for his cow, the gift of a lyre (note—*not* a kithara).⁷³

While the instrument depicted in the *Hymn to Hermes* is clearly a tortoise-shell lyre, the audience knows that, in order to be the appropriate accessory for the mature god Apollo, it has to be a *kithara*. It must, in effect, cross the semiotic divide. Therefore, not only does the poet help the suspension of disbelief by refusing to foreground *either* lyre or kithara in their marked forms (as we have seen above); the poet also depicts Hermes with his *lyre* miming the contexts in which one would expect a *kithara*. That is to say, he plays with the underlying structural opposition of the instruments. Hermes' second song-performance is to the accompaniment of his home-made lyre in an agonistic and legalistic setting, something we might expect from a more formal, judged performance. His composition (422–32) is a theogony, a ritual composition of the sort attributed to the primeval mortal singer Orpheus. Yet, whether or not Apollo is meant to indicate that he has never heard stringed music before, his comment on Hermes' newly produced art relates it to sympotic festivity (*euphrosunê*), love, and sleep (447–49). In other words, this music is underlined as being private, non-ritual, and consolatory—the opposite of *kithara* music on all three counts. Just as the first song-performance of Hermes was compared to the impromptu bantering of young men (lines 55–56), so Apollo compares his second song to the sympotic custom of “passing to the right” at young men's feasts (454: οἷα νέων θαλῆς ἐνδέξια ἔργα πέλονται).⁷⁴ In other words, Hermes' lyre-playing and singing remains firmly within the associative sphere of informality, privacy, and play, even though it might have looked, at first sight, more like a formal theogony appropriate to a professional and publicly competing citharode.

The moment of exchange between Hermes and Apollo, generated by Hermes' second performance, reverses the sort of contract made between

⁷³ On the tale, see D. Clay 2004.

⁷⁴ Perhaps youths singing casual table-songs or *skolia*, if that is what *endexia* refers to: the habit of making songs go round the table in a certain direction, to the right; cf. Càssola 1975, 537, Bowie 1993, 360–61, and Martin 2017.

the Delian maidens and the poetic figure with whom they interact in the *Hymn to Apollo*. “I will give you this instrument; you give me glory,” says Hermes (*Hymn to Hermes* 475–77), whereas the Homer-figure, the blind man of Chios said in effect, “You use my words, I’ll give you fame” (*Hymn to Apollo* 171–75). Apollo, agreeing to the bargain, grants Hermes power over some lesser types of prophecy and ends up gaining a lyre. Yet the verbal transmutation effected by the hymn’s composer has elevated that lyre to the high-status instrument of the god, known elsewhere as the *kithara*—as if a ukelele has been changed into a Stradivarius.

In analyzing myths of performance, one must always ask: *cui bono*? That is to say, which singers of tales would benefit from suggesting, transgressively, that Apollo’s instrumental art was a) the product of a plea-bargain, b) the music of drinking parties, and c) the result of playing on a loosely-strung, lightly resonant instrument that probably could not be heard farther than the end of the table in someone’s house, let alone in a huge crowd at a concert competition? The answer is quite clear. This is precisely the sort of depiction we would expect to be crafted by performers who were themselves *non-musical*, not accompanying themselves on the kithara, reciters rather than singers—which is to say, the *rhapsodes*.⁷⁵ It is not accidental, I suggest, that the exchange in which Apollo gets his instrument involves his counter-gift to Hermes of a *rhabdos* (line 530–32):

Moreover, I will give you a beautiful wand [*rhabdos*] of wealth and fortune, made of gold, trefoil; it will keep you safe from harm, fulfilling all the dispositions of good words and events that I claim to know from the utterance of Zeus.

The staff or wand, symbol of the rhapsodes (from which their name is sometimes derived), makes Hermes resemble another semi-mythic singer, Hesiod, famously given a marvelous *skêptron* in his initiation into poetry by the Muses (*Theogony* 30–31).⁷⁶ Moreover, Hermes’ staff, alongside its magico-talismanic functions to grant fertility, is tied to prophecy, although in what is apparently a mediating manner, dependent on the oracular power of Apollo. Hesiod’s gift, too, involves the ability to proclaim future events as well as celebrate the past (*Theogony* 32).

⁷⁵ Here I would stress the serious intent of the *Hymn to Hermes* depiction, *pace* Power (2010, 434) who sees in it a less fraught presentation of “a playful allegory for Athenians’ own enthusiastic integration of the music of the lyre and *kithara* into their civic and sympotic musical lives.”

⁷⁶ On the derivation of *rhapsoidos*, see González 2013, 336–38, with earlier literature.

In the social world of ancient performer culture, just as in the contemporary world of celebrity musicians (especially rappers), various groups must have characterized one another in an effort to distinguish themselves. Some performers might claim an affiliation between their own art and the genre of citharody, an assertion that makes itself visible in the *Hymn to Apollo*. Others, on the other hand, must have chosen to belittle that very assertion, claiming (as does the *Hymn to Hermes*) that Apollo in fact prefers the sort of privatized, aristocratic, non-ritualized and—most important—*non-agonistic* music associated with the younger boy's instrument, the lyre. Either way, performers lay claim to a divine ancestry and authorization for their own current practices, whether song or recitation. But at the same time, they contested primacy in that sphere.

The under-cutting of citharodic performance, by way of the assertion of the primacy of Hermes' lyre over Apollo's *kithara*, is on one level a kind of inversion joke, the younger initiate (Hermes) making fun of the older initiate model (Apollo). Just as Apollo is the eternal ephebe, Hermes is the eternal trickster, a figure of parody and adolescent play. But these are mythopoeic universals. At the historical level, we can most plausibly pinpoint the context for this competition between musical ideologies within the developing institution of the Panthenaic games at Athens. One key fact distinguishes the Delphic Pythian (and probably the Spartan Carneia) musical contests from the Athenian, as the latter games came to be organized by the Peisistratid tyrants in the sixth century BCE. The Panathenaea featured *rhapsodic* competitions. The Pythian festival did *not*. Even after reorganization in 582 BCE, the Pythian musical contests featured only: citharody (the originating event); playing the *kithara* without singing; playing the *aulos*; and singing to the accompaniment of the *aulos*. That is to say, there was no rhapsodic recitation. Gregory Nagy has shown in a magisterial series of works how the Panathenaeic complex and its ideology shaped the rhapsodic treatment of Homer.⁷⁷ As he points out in his book, *Plato's Rhapsody and Homer's Music*, even in the fourth century, rhapsodic competition, in terms of prize money, took second place in comparison to citharody, for which one could win, at least in 380 BCE, 1000 drachmas.⁷⁸ What the prize scale was in the sixth century is hard to tell. At any rate, at some point, the Homeric hymns, too, must have been in the orbit of the rhapsodic competitions,

⁷⁷ On the key importance of the Panathenaeic context for Homeric recitation, see Nagy 2002 and 2010.

⁷⁸ Nagy 2002, 38–40.

probably at Athens, and most likely at other cities as well. At the same time, singers would be competing, perhaps with similar material, in singing to the kithara. The testimonia about the citharode Terpander indicate that he sang his own material but also set Homeric verse to music.⁷⁹ From the point of view of the evolution of poetic forms, this is interesting; from the point of view of a rhapsode, it is downright *dangerous*. Walter Burkert suggested some years ago that the rhapsodic format was itself in a sort of competition with emerging poetry of the type we see in the choral poet Stesichorus.⁸⁰ For choral lyric, I would now substitute as the nemesis of the rhapsodes, at least in mythic terms and the manipulation of myth, the art of citharody. The *Hymn to Hermes* asserts that *Apollo is no citharode*. If this strategic move succeeds, the god is safely marginalized as a lyre-player: Apollo remains a musician, but the citharodes lose a patron—to the conspicuous public benefit of their rivals or descendants, the rhapsodes, reciters in public of hexameter verses without music. Since there is no standard contest in the singing of lyric verse, elevating Hermes and his instrument does not pose a risk to the rhapsodes. They have simply, through compositions like the *Hymn to Hermes*, mythologized away the threat.

The more general point that we might take away from this twin study of the inter-relations of craft and the rhetoric about it, as well as the craft of talk, the *logos* of *tekhnē*? It is the pressure of Greek agonism, of contests, of judgment (*krisis*) within a ritual situation—the Pythian games on the one hand, and the Panathenaea on the other—that have encouraged the growth of an entire body of myth, lore, and explanation to undergird a set of rules and regulations. *Out of krisis come kriteria*. The aesthetics we innocently associate with both lyre or kithara playing, and naively, perhaps, fail to disambiguate when looking at representations of Apollo, are an expression of contestation, social and artistic clashes reaching back at least to the sixth century BCE. But, by the same token, *all* aesthetic values in the classical tradition, we should realize, emerge from specific settings of parameters in taste, bound up with the realities of social practice, religious affiliations, class and ethnic ties. Let us not be lured back into Neo-Classical assumptions that Greek aesthetics was the pure product of unfettered disinterested thought. In the same spirit, I would suggest that we should recognize and make use of such parallels or potential continuities as the modern Greek poetic and musical scene can offer, especially but not only in more traditional areas, in order

⁷⁹ Gostoli 1990, 18–22. See Power 2010 *passim*, for the most complete analysis of Terpander.

⁸⁰ Burkert 1987.

to discover, in precise ethnographic terms, how the pressure of competition shapes authors and authority, contexts and content.

The fate of Apollo's craft, then, is like the result of Poseidon's crash-test, writ large. Compared to the meager fragments of citharodic verse that we still possess, the rhapsodic epics attributed to Homer are massive monuments. They are the vehicles that got through the grove. Yet Apollo's kithara, like the losers' chariots, survives and is celebrated even when silent, suspended in dedication.⁸¹

⁸¹ This paper took its final shape as a contribution to the Athens Dialogues of the Onassis Foundation, Athens (November 24–27, 2010). Its second section originated as a talk at Delphi in the conference on Apolline Politics and Poetics in 2003, and was later expanded and modified in a talk at the International Symposium on Myth and Poetics in La Plata, Argentina in June 2009 (subsequently published as Martin 2010). This chapter represents my continued reflection on the various problems involved, and is significantly changed from the earlier versions.

THE SENSES OF AN ENDING

MYTH, RITUAL, AND POETIC

EXODIA IN PERFORMANCE¹

Citharodic Closings

Rare and unusual information about ancient performance traditions is contained in a fragment attributed to a scholar of the Hadrianic period, Aelius Dionysius the Atticist. He is probably the same man whose voluminous works on the history of music are mentioned in the *Suda* and several other sources, for these included much information on auletes, citharodes, and poets, and the lexicon shows similar familiarity with technical terms of *mousikê*.² For example, Aelius Dionysius preserves for us the term *epipor-pama* (a kind of jacket worn by citharodes), which he quotes from Plato the comic poet (PCG 10):

ἐπιπόρπωμα ἢ τῶν κιθαροφδῶν ἐφαπτίς. Πλάτων ἐν *Ταῖς ἀφ' ἱερῶν*
“δότω τὴν κιθάραν τις ἔνδοθεν καὶ τοῦπιπόρπωμα.”

¹ Originally published in *Donum natalicium digitaliter confectum Gregorio Nagy septuagenario a discipulis collegis familiaribus oblatum: A Virtual Birthday Gift Presented to Gregory Nagy on Turning Seventy by His Students, Colleagues, and Friends*, ed. V. Bers et al. (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2012), http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:CHS_Bers_etal_eds.Donum_Natalicium_Gregorio_Nagy.2012.

² On the historian of music, see *Suda* δ 1171: Διονύσιος, Ἀλικαρνασεύς, γεγωνὸς ἐπὶ Ἀδριανοῦ Καίσαρος, σοφιστής, καὶ Μουσικὸς κληθεὶς διὰ τὸ πλεῖστον ἀσκηθῆναι τὰ τῆς μουσικῆς. ἔγραψε δὲ *Ῥυθμικῶν ὑπομνημάτων* βιβλία κδ', *Μουσικῆς ἱστορίας* βιβλία λς'· ἐν δὲ τούτοις αὐλητῶν καὶ κιθαροφδῶν καὶ ποιητῶν παντοίων μέμνηται· *Μουσικῆς παιδείας ἢ διατριβῶν* βιβλία κβ', *Τίνα μουσικῶς εἴρηται ἐν τῇ Πλάτωνος Πολιτείᾳ* βιβλία ε'. Schwabe (1890, 6) is agnostic on the question of whether the Atticist was the same man as the musicologist, but cites Müller's belief that they were. On the lexicographical work in relation to other such work, see Erbse 1950.

Epiporpama: The citharodes' uppergarment. Plato in *The Women from the Temples*. "Let someone from inside give the *kithara* and the epiporpama."

The following fragment on musicians and poets is transmitted by the Byzantine scholar Photius (*Lexicon* α 987):

Ἀλλ' ἄναξ· ἐξοδίου κιθαρωδικοῦ ἀρχή, ὥπερ κωμικοῦ μὲν (adesp. fr. 48 Dem.) ἦδε "καλλιστέφανος," ῥαψωδῶν δὲ "νῦν δὲ θεοὶ μάκαρες τῶν ἐσθλῶν ἄφθονοὶ ἐστε."

"But, lord." The beginning of a citharodic *exodion* [exit song], just as of the comic [*exodion*] there is this: "having a beautiful crown" and of the rhapsodes: "Now, blessed gods, be unstinting in fine things."

Although he does not attribute it directly in his *Lexicon* to Aelius Dionysius, Photius elsewhere speaks of the utility of the Atticist's specialized lexicon, *Attika Onomata*, and recommends it—in both its first and second *ekdoseis*—to all who would care to learn Athenian epichoric terms for lawsuits and festivals, among much other useful information (Photius *Bibliotheca* Cod. 152–53). Several other late sources enable us to fill out further this intriguing bit of antiquarian lore. The fullest version of the information, and the only to trace it directly back to Aelius Dionysius, comes in the twelfth-century Homeric commentary by Eustathius, in partial explanation of a line in Book 2 of the *Iliad* (Eustathius *ad Homeri Iliadem* 1:364, line 6):

(v. 360) Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ "ἄλλ' ἄναξ," ὅπερ ἐνταῦθα παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ κεῖται, ἀρχή τις ἐξοδίου κιθαρωδικοῦ τὸ "ἀλλὰ ἄλλ' ἄναξ," ὡς ἰστορεῖ Αἴλιος Διονύσιος, ὥπερ, φησί κωμικοῦ μὲν ἦδε "καλλιστέφανος," ῥαψωδοῦ δὲ αὕτη "νῦν δὲ θεοὶ μάκαρες τῶν ἐσθλῶν ἄφθονοὶ ἐστε," τραγικοῦ δὲ "πολλὰ μορφὰι τῶν δαιμονίων."³

Note that from "but lord" which is here found in the poet, there is a beginning of a citharodic *exodion*, the [phrase] "but [other things?] lord," as Aelius Dionysius relates, just as, he says, there is this of the comic [*exodion*]: "having a beautiful crown," and this of the rhapsodes: "Now, blessed gods,

³ I disagree with the punctuation provided by the latest editor, Theodoridis 1982, 106 (lemma #987); he includes ἦδε within the quoted *exodion*. The correct syntax (and thus punctuation) is clear from the otherwise similar Eustathius passage (κωμικοῦ μὲν ἦδε vs. ῥαψωδοῦ δὲ αὕτη). Schwabe (1890, 102) prints the phrase correctly and notes further (103 n2) that lexicographers also collected proemial phrases, e.g., Hesychius α 3944 ἀμφὶ ἄνακτα ἀρχὴ νόμου κιθαρωδικοῦ (cf. Terpander. fr. 2 Gostoli = PMG 697).

be unstinting in fine things.” And of the tragic [*exodion*]: “many are the shapes of the divine.”⁴

Zenobius the paroemiographer (*Centuria* 5.99) appears to give a faulty version of the rhapsodic tag-line, but usefully adds a phrase to the citharodic closing:

Σὺν δὲ θεοὶ μάκαρες, τοῦτο ἐπιλέγουσιν οἱ ῥαψωδοὶ ὥς καὶ οἱ κιθαρωδοί,
“Ἄλλ’ ἄναξ μάλα χαῖρε.”

In addition [reading *sun*, rather than the more plausible *nun*] the blessed gods: the rhapsodes make a formal close with this [*epilegousin*]. In the same way, too, the citharodes “but lord, rejoice/farewell, indeed.”⁵

Diogenianus (*Centuria* 6.88), another collector of proverbs, attests to the more plausible phrasing “Now [*nun*] blessed gods,” although his version (missing the particle *de*) is unmetrical for inclusion in hexameter verses. He indicates further that the phrase had a usage—perhaps outside of any poetic context—“said of those worthily avenged for what they did” (ἐπὶ τῶν ἀξίως τιμωρουμένων ἐφ’ οἷς ἔπραξαν). An entry in the *Suda* (σ 1454) employs the Zenobian phrasing (Σὺν δὲ θεοὶ μάκαρες), identifies it as rhapsodic, then gives a slightly shorter form of the citharodic signature line (ἀλλ’ ἄναξ χαῖρε), and ends by explaining “these are finishing phrases (ἐπιφωνήματα) among the old-time poets.” No doubt the traditions of stylistic ornamentation among the teachers of rhetoric have influenced this description, as they may also have helped preserve the details about closing phrases, in the first place. We can note, for example, that the essay of Demetrius on style devotes a section to the definition and use of the *epiphônêma* (*De elocutione* 106–111)—although he expands the idea to cover ornamental passages unneeded by the immediate argument (such as a phrase used to fill out a Homeric simile, or a gnomic utterance added to the narrative description of the arms in the hall of Odysseus).⁶

While we can see that the theorists of prose writing, as often, sought models in epic usage, and may have tacitly acknowledged the poetic performance practice of rhapsodes, citharodes, and others singing a stylized end-piece—the *exodion*—there is no sign that any of them (including Dionysius

⁴ On the evidence of the other attestations, I assume the repetition in Eustathius (ἀλλὰ ἀλλ’ ἄναξ) is a garbled transmission of an original ἀλλ’ ἄναξ, although van der Valk 1971 ad loc. does not entertain this possibility.

⁵ For *epilegô* as “make formal close,” I rely on the usage of such later genres as Attic oratory, in which *epilogos* was a recognized and stylized final portion of the defense speech; see LSJ s.v.

⁶ Cf. Hermogenes *De inventione* 4.9, for an even more expansive definition.

of Halicarnassus, whom the *Suda* [δ 1174] identifies as an ancestor of Aelius Dionysius the Atticist) elaborated on the specific form of these four types of poetic *exodia* or their wording.⁷ But, then again, there are very few signs that the poetry itself, in the form that we now have it, featured any of the phrases that we find preserved by the lexicographic and paroemiographic traditions.

We might initially take comfort in seeing the lore about *exodia* confirmed by extant tragedies that do in fact end with the tag-line “many are the shapes of the divine.” The full tragic *exodion*, as found in the *Alcestis* of Euripides, runs (1159–63):

πολλὰ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,
πολλὰ δ' ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,
τῶν δ' ἄδοκῆτων πόρον ἦρε θεός.
τοιόνδ' ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα.

There are many shapes of divinity, and many things the gods
accomplish against our expectation. What men expect is not
brought to pass, but a god finds a way to achieve the unexpected.
Such was the outcome of this story. [trans. Kovacs]

Three other tragedies by Euripides end with these exact lines (*Andromache*, *Helen*, *Bacchae*). Encouraged by this confirmation, we might then look at verses that are associated with rhapsodes or citharodes to see whether the conventional verse tag-lines assigned to their respective performers are found in our surviving texts. By extension, we could even hope to identify some compositions as having been part of certain genres or repertoires given the occurrence of the conventional *exodia* in them. But hopes of finding an exact repetition of either sort of rhapsodic or citharodic *exodion* are soon shattered by experiment. On the other hand, the pursuit becomes all the more interesting when we open up the possibility that our extant texts, while they may not quote *exodia* tag-lines, stylize, allude to, or present family resemblances to these apparently well-known phrases. It could be that performers, indeed, avoided direct use of the phrases precisely to undermine audience expectations, while still providing a touch that would recall to mind the poetic convention. Then, too, we can imagine the possibilities for signalling genre-crossing that such tacitly shared audience-performer knowledge could generate. All this requires us to think beyond the

⁷ On the employment in later analysts of rhetorical practice, especially Aristotle, of Homeric poetry, see now Knudsen 2014.

immediate *text* and to incorporate the *context* of live performance—which is itself a sort of text—into our interpretations.⁸

Let us begin with the alleged citharodic *exodion*, in the fullest form that we can reconstruct *ἄλλὰ ἄναξ μάλα χαῖρε.⁹ Two details of my reconstruction are worth pausing over. Although the sources transmit only the elided form ἄλλ’ ἄναξ, this combined with the rest of the phrase (preserved only in Zenobius) would be unmetrical for a hexameter.¹⁰ It could of course be argued that citharodic *nomoi* were *not* regularly composed in hexameters. Our picture is complicated by the innovations of Timotheus and other proponents of the New Music at Athens in the later fifth century.¹¹ The testimonia do tell us that Terpander, the alleged seventh-century BCE inventor of the names of the *nomoi*, and a composer of them, put Homeric hexameters, as well as his own hexameter verses, to melodic accompaniment (test. 27 Gostoli = Heraclides Ponticus fr. 157 Wehrli). But as Gregory Nagy and others have pointed out, lyric meters, some related to the hexameter, are also attested for such *nomoi*.¹² A second point to keep in mind is that an unelided form *ἄλλὰ ἄναξ would be linguistically older; Eustathius, offering what must be a mangled form of the phrase in the sequence “ἄλλὰ ἄλλ’ ἄναξ” (difficult to understand unless the second word represents a neuter plural object of some unexpressed verb), might nevertheless be preserving a memory of an original *unelided* phrase *ἄλλὰ ἄναξ in citharodic use. (I shall return shortly to Eustathius and this phrase, as it does appear unelided in the Homeric context upon which he comments.) Poets of a generation no longer aware of the original initial digamma in **wanax* (as we see it attested in Mycenaean) would naturally avoid the apparent hiatus and elide to ἄλλ’

⁸ I am inspired by Reynolds 1995, a meticulous ethnographic study stressing the need to view “context” as the real “text” (and vice versa) in oral performances.

⁹ Power (2010, 188–89) assumes the phrase was dactylic, but interprets it as more likely “the lead-off verse ... of the end of the prooimion rather than of the song proper,” comparing it to the conclusion of many *Homeric Hymns* (e.g., 21.5, 31.17).

¹⁰ See also for the elision Hesychius α 3113: ἄλλ’ ἄναξ· ἐξόδιον κιθαριζῶν τοῦτο, καθάπ<ερ ῥαπ>φδῶν καὶ τὸ “νῦν <δὲ θεοί >”

¹¹ Power (2010, 336–50) looks at the testimonia concerning Terpander and other early figures in the light of Timotheus and the New Music.

¹² It is worth quoting Nagy (1990, 89 n.36) regarding a prime source of our information, [Plutarch] *On Music* (1132de): “In this source, the *nomoi* of Terpander are understood anachronistically as equivalent to the *nomoi* of Timotheus of Miletus, a virtuoso composer of the late fifth century, who is said to have composed his earliest *nomoi* in dactylic hexameters: “Plutarch” *On Music* 1132e. At 1132de (see Barker 1984:209 n. 25) the source infers that Terpander too composed primarily hexameters (though it would be more accurate to say, on the basis of Terpander PMG 697, that Terpander composed in meters related to the hexameter: Gentili and Giannini 1977:35–36).”

ἄναξ. At any rate, in looking for traces of this phrase, I have searched for both elided and unelided forms over the whole range of Greek epic and lyric verses, using as a basis of comparison both the short and long versions of the alleged *exodion*. There are some interesting results.

The logical place to look first is among verses identified as citharodic, meager as they are. Timotheus of Miletus, in his famous *nomos*, *The Persians* (PMG 791), uses the word ἄλλ' at the very end of his citharodic composition, in combination with the *sphrêgis* that gives his name and polis affiliation (234–40):

Μίλητος δὲ πόλις νιν ἄ
 θρέψας' ἄ δυωδεκατειχέος
 λαοῦ πρωτέος ἐξ Ἀχαιῶν.
 ἀλλ' ἑκαταβόλε Πύθι' ἀγνὰν `
 ἔλθοις τάνδε πόλιν σὺν ὀλβῳ,
 πέμπων ἀπήμονι λαῷ
 τῶιδ' εἰρήναν θάλλουσιν εὐνομίᾳ.

It was the city of Miletus that nurtured him, the city of a twelve-walled people that is foremost among the Achaeans. Come far-shooting Pythian, to this holy city and bring prosperity with you, conveying to this people, that they be untroubled, peace that flourishes in good civic order. [trans. Campbell]

Admittedly, it is not followed by ἄναξ or the rest of the full citharodic tag-line. Yet the line does contain a vocative addressing the god Apollo as Pythios and formulates a prayer for peace and prosperity.¹³ (In this latter point, it resembles the rhapsodic *exodion*, which is overtly a prayer for similar good things: *esthla*.)

Of course, it might be objected that almost all Greek hymns feature a send-off formula of some sort, even if ἄλλ[α] ἄναξ μάλα χαῖρε never occurs verbatim. As Hordern points out (2002, 246), in connection with the end of the Timotheus poem, “a short prayer is a common feature at the end of hymns,” adducing epigraphically attested poems by Isyllus, Ismenius, Philodamos, Limenius, and Aristonous. In effect, we are dealing with normal Greek prayer-style, of the sort represented even in a lower register by the writer of mimiambic verses, the Hellenistic poet Herodas, as in the opening

¹³ Gostoli 1990, 147 notes the dictional resemblance between these lines and the *exodion*, but prefers to see the similarity as the result of widespread, traditional formulaic closings and salutations.

So the individual elements of the alleged citharodic *exodion*—*khaire*-forms, forms of **wanak*—are hardly surprising in a hymnic context. In addition to the examples above, and in several epigraphic hymns, it is worth noting that *every one* of the collection of Homeric hymns contains a *khaire* formula.¹⁴ A few employ a multiform line that is quite close in wording to the citharodic *exodion*, as the following examples show:

In Herculem, line 9:

Χαῖρε ἄναξ Διὸς υἱέ· δίδου δ' ἄρετήν τε καὶ ὄλβον.

In Solem, line 17:

Χαῖρε ἄναξ, πρόφρων δὲ βίον θυμήρε' ὅπαζε·

In Lunam, line 17:

Χαῖρε ἄνασσα θεὰ λευκώλενε δῖα Σελήνη

Whether such lines are meant to actively summon up *citharodic* practice, in a medium that might have been recited rather than sung (see below), or whether the resemblance is a reflex of a more general hymnic-prayer rhetoric, it is hard to deny that the placement of these verses underlines their similarity with the citharodic *exodion*.

It may be slightly more surprising that citharodic compositions (so it would appear, if the information about the *exodion* is correct) were at some time period explicitly connected with a singer's farewell to a god—a markedly hymnic closing for a genre that we might not immediately associate with hymns. If we take them at face value (perhaps unwisely), the words of Plato's Athenian in the *Laws* (700b) make it clear that at some (perhaps irrecoverable) point, hymns were distinct from *nomoi*, and citharodic were distinct from other sorts:

Among us, at that time, music was divided into various classes and styles: one class of song was that of prayers to the gods, which bore the name of "hymns"; contrasted with this was another class, best called "dirges"; "paeans" formed another; and yet another was the "dithyramb," named, I fancy, after Dionysus. "Nomes" also were so called as being a distinct class of song; and these were further described as "citharodic nomes" [νόμους τε αὐτὸ τοῦτο τοῦνομα ἐκάλουν, ὥδην ὡς τινα ἐτέραν ἐπέλεγον δὲ κιθαρωδικούς].

¹⁴ Cf. also the *Paeon Erythraeus in Aesculapium*, lines 19–20 (Χαῖρέ μοι, ἴλαος δ' ἐπινίσσεο τὰν ἐμὰν πόλιν εὐρύχορον) and the *Paeon in Apollinem et Aesculapium* (= IG 3.1.171b), lines 23–24 (Χαῖρε, βροτοῖς μέγ' ὄνειαρ, δαῖμον κλεινότατε, ὦ [ἰὲ Παιάν]), both in Powell 1925.

Then again, paeans and dithyrambs, which Plato's speaker places apart from *humnoi*, are clearly directed towards gods (Apollo and Dionysus, usually), just like hymns. Because the texts of identifiable citharodic nomes are so meager, the lore about citharodes must be consulted. It yields a number of details that do connect performance to the god Apollo. First of all, Apollo as depicted in the *Hymn to Apollo*, and in visual art, is himself the archetypal citharode.¹⁵ Second, the chief festival at his shrine in Delphi had as its centerpiece in the *mousikoi agônes* a citharodic competition.¹⁶ Before the reorganization of the Pythian games in the sixth century BCE, the *only* contest was in citharody, which according to Pausanias, took the form of singing a hymn to Apollo. The first winner was Chrysothemis of Crete (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 10.7.3):

The oldest contest and the one for which they first offered prizes was, according to tradition, the singing of a hymn to the god. The man who sang and won the prize was Chrysothemis of Crete, whose father Carmanor is said to have cleansed Apollo. After Chrysothemis, says tradition, Philammon won with a song, and after him his son Thamyras. But they say that Orpheus, a proud man and conceited about his mysteries, and Musaeus, who copied Orpheus in everything, refused to submit to the competition in musical skill.

They say too that Eleuther won a Pythian victory for his loud and sweet voice, for the song that he sang was not of his own composition. The story is that Hesiod too was debarred from competing because he had not learned to accompany his own singing on the harp. Homer too came to Delphi to inquire about his needs, but even though he had learned to play the harp, he would have found the skill useless owing to the loss of his eye-sight.

A supplement to Pausanias' information at this point comes from a tradition passed down by the Byzantine scholar Photius (*Bibliotheca* 320b) that the mortal singer Chrysothemis was the first to wear expensive clothing and to take up the kithara to sing a solo *nomos* or traditional song-pattern in *imitation* of Apollo (*eis mimêsin Apollonos*). This anecdote is nothing less than an aetiological story to explain the customary dress of both competitive citharists and their instruments. In sum, we can rest assured that the

¹⁵ See Nagy 1990, 353 on "the archetypal virtuoso performance of Apollo"; in this volume, see further Chapters 5 and 7.

¹⁶ On the Pythian *agôn* see Power 2010, 371–78.

citharodic nomes featured a strong tie to Apollo as addressee, performance model, and probably theme.

Before turning to non-hymnic—or, at least, possibly *covert* hymnic—allusions to the citharodic art, we should note that the seemingly least important word of the *exodion* we have thus far been examining—ἄλλ’—is actually quite highly marked, in and of itself, as indicating a turn away from the narrative of a hymn and toward closure.¹⁷ Consider, for example, the ending of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* as it turns from narrating the blessings of the older goddess, to a direct address to the immortal pair (Demeter and her daughter Persephone):

Ἄλλ’ ἄγ’ Ἐλευσῖνος θυοέσσης δῆμον ἔχουσαι 490
καὶ Πάρον ἀμφιρῦτην Ἄντρωνά τε πετρῆεντα,
πότνια ἀγλαόδωρ’ ὠρηφόρε Διοῖ ἄνασσα,
αὐτὴ καὶ κόρη περικαλλῆς Περσεφόνηια
πρόφρονες ἀντ’ ὄδῃς βίοντον θυμήρε’ ὀπάξειν.
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ σεῖο καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομ’ ἀοιδῆς.

So come, you that preside over the people of fragrant Eleusis,
and seagirt Paros and rocky Antron—Lady, bringer of resplendent gifts in season, mistress Deo, both you and your daughter,
beautiful Persephone: be favorable, and grant comfortable livelihood in return for my singing. And I will take heed both for you
and for other singing. [trans. West 2003]

Through phonic resonances the key indicator of the send-off (ἄλλ’) echoes twice (see *italicized* words above) as the poet begs for livelihood in exchange for the song—a perfect example of the *do ut des* economy in which ancient hymnic poetry operated. The final echo in ἄλλης ... ἀοιδῆς functions to forecast future performances of this or a similar song; but at the same time, as has been pointed out by Gregory Nagy, this ending allows the rhapsodic “hymn” to segue into a performance of another type of *hymnos*—namely Homeric epic. We can do no better in attempting to articulate this state of the evidence than quote at some length Nagy’s own elegant formulation in *Pindar’s Homer*:

¹⁷ This would seem to be a long-lasting convention: cf. the ending of a Sibylline Oracle of the Imperial period (Geffcken #11, lines 322–24), which is even closer to the citharodic *exodion* (and also embeds a final phrase from the shorter *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*):

ἀλλά, ἄναξ, νῦν παῦσον ἐμὴν πολυήρατον αὐδὴν
οἷστρον ἀπωσάμενος καὶ ἐτήτυμον ἔνθεον ὁμφὴν
καὶ μανίην φοβεράν, δὸς δ’ ἱμερόεσσαν ἀοιδίην.

That these Hymns are morphologically preludes, with the inherited function of introducing the main part of the performance, is illustrated by references indicating a shift to the performance proper, such as *metabêsomai allon es humnon* ‘I will shift to the rest of the song [*humnos*]’ at *Homeric Hymns* 5 (verse 293), 9 (verse 9), and 18 (verse 11). To sum up the essence of the prooimion, I quote the wording of Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria* 4.1.2): *quod oimê cantus est, et citharoedi pauca illa, quae antequam legitimum certamen inchoent, emerendi favoris gratia canunt, prooemium cognominaverunt...* ‘that *oimê* is song and that the *kitharôidoi* refer to those few words that they sing before their contest proper, for the sake of winning favor, as *prooimion* ...’. Quintilian’s reference to ‘those few words’ sung by the *kitharôidoi* ‘lyre [*kitharâ*] singers’ is belied by the proportions of some of the larger *Homeric Hymns*, which had evolved into magnificent extravaganzas that rival epic in narrative power, as in the case of the *Hymn to Apollo*. It is in fact legitimate to ask whether the *Homeric Hymns*, especially the larger ones, were functional preludes ...”

Nagy concludes that “the medium of the *Homeric Hymns*, which is poetry recited in dactylic hexameter, is several stages removed from the medium of *kitharôidiâ*, that is, song.”¹⁸

With the mention of the mode for performance of the *Homeric Hymns*, in view of their citharodic relations, we need to pause for a moment to recognize a more complex interpretive situation than that involved in tracing prayer tropes and “sacral” language within hymns. Or, more accurately, we need to face the problem of explicating multiple speech-genre and song-related layers in early Greek poetry. That is to say, it is possible to foreground—but not to extricate—diction and rhetorical tropes that we can imagine being shared with non-poetic prayer (greetings to a god; the *hypomnesis* of a prayer, in which the god’s past intercession or the worshipper’s past invocations are recalled; the final wish for some boon; and send-off formulas). In fact, our earliest “prayers” in Greek are already all in poetic form—that is to say, literary representations of prayer—and it would be difficult in practice to distinguish “poetic” prayer from “actual.” Except for a few scattered notices, we do not have anything in Greek like the corpus of Latin prayers preserved by the elder Cato in *De Agricultura*. Another way of approaching this problem is to admit the possibility that all prayers in early Greek were in high style, with formal metrical and phonic means that kept them distinct from “prose”—that, in fact, “poetry” was the medium with

¹⁸ Nagy 1990, 353–54.

which to pray. It is a short step from here to the assertion that prayer and hymn in early Greek are in fact indistinguishable.

With Homeric hymns, however, we meet two degrees of further complexity. First, the hymnic function, as it is represented by the *Hymn to Apollo* and *Hymn to Hermes*, is unmistakably equivalent to citharodic performance, as Nagy has demonstrated. It features one performer, master of an instrument and singing to its music. Chronologically, the instrument moves from Hermes to Apollo (if we credit the tale of the *Hymn to Hermes*, itself highly colored with a particular musical ideology). I have argued that the pairing of the *Hymn to Apollo* and *Hymn to Hermes* allows us to trace a significant symbolic transfer that must be related to the relative standing of archaic Greek performance traditions, in which not only are sympotic lyric forms, accompanied with either *barbitos* or tortoise-shell lyre, set apart from public, citharodic competitive performances, but also citharodic performances of the agonistic type familiar at Delphi and Athens were distinguished from rhapsodic recitations—the latter, significantly, a feature of the Athenian Panathenaea but not the Delphic Pythia.¹⁹ (As we shall see below, similar competing versions must undergird the lore about Archilochus and his acquisition or lack of instruments.)

However—a second point of complexity—Homeric hymns were themselves in all probability not just several stages removed from citharody, but had become embedded in the *rhapsodic* competition repertoire. One telling passage suggesting this comes at the end of the shorter *Hymn to Aphrodite* in the corpus, where the poet—using the *khaire*-diction familiar from the citharodic *exodion*—asks for victory “*in this contest*”:²⁰

Χαῖρ' ἑλικοβλέφαρε γλυκυμείλιχε, δὸς δ' ἐν ἀγῶνι
νίκην τῷδε φέρεσθαι, ἐμὴν δ' ἔντυνον αἰοιδήν. 20
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ σεῖο καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομ' αἰοιδῆς.

I salute you, sweet-and-gentle one of curling lashes: grant me victory *in this competition*, and order my singing. And I will take heed both for you and for other singing. [trans. West 2003]

¹⁹ Chapter 5 above; see also Martin 2011. Power (2010, 468–75) discusses the “lyric politics” underlying the depiction of the transfer in the *Hymn to Hermes*. His analysis of the *Hymn*’s melding of sympotic with competitive citharody does not cover the contrast I would draw between Athenian (Panathenaic) and Delphic (Pythian) festival contexts, as they are ideologically expressed in the *Hymn to Hermes* vs. the *Hymn to Apollo*. Elsewhere (250–57), Power does note the rivalry between citharodes and rhapsodes expressed variously in ancient sources. I would simply extend this insight to the contrastive stances of the two *Homeric Hymns* just mentioned.

²⁰ See further Chapter 7 below.

The deployment of the unmarked word “song” (ᾠοιδῆς) here and elsewhere in hexameter verse that was most likely *recited* allows the competing poet to elide the actual conditions of performance and to affiliate himself with a tradition of musically accompanied verse, whether or not he himself plays or is accompanied by a musician. To put this another way, one type of poetry shaped for competitive performance in *recitation* (hexameter long narrative, including Homeric style hymns) clearly asserts a genealogical link to another type of poetry meant for *singing* (again, in competition) to the accompaniment of a kithara. What is the upshot? In short, we have a perfect setting for intertextual, inter-generic, and inter-performative hybridization. Recall once more that the Panathenaea featured *both* rhapsodic *and* citharodic competitions: it was only natural that performers of one type would listen to and learn from those of the other, and that audiences for both would appreciate strategies, tropes, and even phrasings borrowed and shifting (in inter-generic competition) from one to the other. We might label this speculative, but—as with most philological work beyond the most basic steps—a certain amount of imaginative “reconstruction forward” has to be indulged in if we are to make progress.

To return to the analytical problem at a slightly more abstract level: any occurrence of sacral, prayer diction (*khaire*, *anax*) might be “hymnic” in a general application of that term. If we take seriously the evidence of Aelius Dionysius, at least one specific “sacral” usage was associated with *citharodic* songs (or, if we extrapolate from other lore about Delphic traditions, citharodic hymns *to Apollo* in particular). But, as I have noted already, the citharodic use must further be viewed within the framework of competitive citharoidia, at Athens, Sparta, and Delphi (to name just three of the premier venues for this contest). I propose now that the *exodion* ἀλλ[ᾶ] ἄναξ μάλα χαῖρε was a sign and a product of that very competition. As a convention, it was by definition well-known, part of the audience’s horizon of expectation. Here we have the parallel of the tragic *exodia* to guide us. They must have developed at Dionysiac competitions in Athens and probably served the same function of indicating to judges and audience that the play was over—a curtain, as it were, in a theater that lacked such devices.

Given the conventional quality of citharodic *exodia*, I propose further that the “hymnic” or prayer style address (or elements thereof) involving address to a **wanax* or the verb *khaire* might crop up even in *rhapsodic* usage—that is to say, in the performance of Homeric, Hesiodic, or other recited poetry—and, when it did, could carry with it the distinct trace of a dual heritage—not just as (generic) “prayer” or “hymn” but as the sort of

language used in citharodic contestation. In other words, it might repay the effort of hearing a few instances of such language within rhapsodic poetry played against a “citharodic” sound-track, to see whether these already rich texts might yield even more meaningful resonances.

In a previous work, I have pointed out briefly how one “rhapsodic” text that strives to assert its “citharodic” relationships makes use of the language found in the citharodic exordia.²¹ This is the *Hymn to Apollo*, at lines 165–81:

ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ἰλήκοι μὲν Ἀπόλλων Ἀρτέμιδι ξύν, 165
 χαίρετε δ' ὑμεῖς πᾶσαι ἐμεῖο δὲ καὶ μετόπισθε
 μνήσασθ', ὅπποτε κέν τις ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων
 ἐνθάδ' ἀνείρηται ξείνος ταλαπείριος ἐλθών
 “ὦ κοῦραι, τίς δ' ὕμιν ἀνὴρ ἥδιστος αἰοιδῶν
 ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται, καὶ τέφ' τέρπεσθε μάλιστα;” 170
 ὑμεῖς δ' εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθαι ἀφήμως ·
 “τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ, οἰκεῖ δὲ Χίῳ ἐνὶ παιπαλοέσσει,
 τοῦ πᾶσαι μετόπισθεν ἀριστεύουσιν αἰοδαί.”
 ἡμεῖς δ' ὑμέτερον κλέος οἴσομεν ὅσσον ἐπ' αἶαν
 ἀνθρώπων στρεφόμεσθα πόλεις εὖ ναιεταώσας 175
 οἱ δ' ἐπὶ δὴ πείσονται, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐτήτυμόν ἐστιν.
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν οὐ λήξω ἐκηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα
 ὑμνέων ἀργυρότοξον ὃν ἠΰκομος τέκε Λητώ.
 ὦ ἄνα, καὶ Λυκίην καὶ Μηονίην ἐρατεινὴν
 καὶ Μίλητον ἔχεις ἔναλον πόλιν ἱμερόεσσαν, 180
 αὐτὸς δ' αὖ Δήλοιο περικλύστου μέγ' ἀνάσσεις.

But now, may Apollo be favorable, together with Artemis, and hail, all you Maidens! Think of me in future, if ever some long-suffering stranger comes here and asks, “O Maidens, which is your favorite singer who visits here, and who do you enjoy most?” *Then you must all answer with one voice* (?), “It is a blind man, and he lives in rocky Chios; all of his songs remain supreme afterwards.” *And we* will carry your reputation wherever we go as we roam the well-ordered cities of men, and they will believe it, because it is true. *And myself, I shall not* cease from hymning the far-shooter Apollo of the silver bow, whom lovely-haired Leto bore.

²¹ The idea was expressed in one paragraph in my paper on “Apollo Citharode” delivered at Delphi in the conference on *Apolline Politics and Poetics* in July 2003. This was later reworked and modified in a talk at the International Symposium on Myth and Poetics in La Plata, Argentina in June 2009, which resulted in the publication of Martin 2010. A longer English version was delivered at the Athens Dialogues in November 2010 and is reworked in this volume as Chapter 5.

O Lord, Lycia too is yours, and lovely Lydia, and Miletus the beautiful town by the sea; and you again, none other, are the great lord of wave-washed Delos. [trans. West 2003]

Clearly, all four elements of the citharodic *exodion* appear in these lines: (ἀλλ' at 165; ἄνα, 179; μάλα, 171; χαίρετε, 166). In retrospect, I now see more clearly that the conventional citharodic *exodion* has been dispersed and re-cast in two ways. First, there is an internal expansion (lines 166–78) that arises from the hymnist's elaborate presentation of a dialogic episode within the narrative, in which the poet-speaker (“the man from Chios”) addresses the Delian maidens and contrasts their epichoric choral performance (marvelous for its fascinating imitative qualities) with his own mobile song-making—perhaps, Panhellenic in ambition.²² If we did not have the intricate pronominal play of *hûmeis/hêmeis/egôn* (lines 166, 171, 174, 177), which is generated by this interplay (itself a vivid genre-contrast), and could in effect collapse the passage, suppressing the lines that intervene and that describe the respective musical accomplishments and tasks of the performing entities, line 165 would meet up with 179:

ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ἰλήκοι μὲν Ἀπόλλων Ἀρτέμιδι ξύν,	165
ὦ ἄνα, καὶ Λυκίην καὶ Μηονίην ἐρατεινήν	179

That is, a version of the citharodic *exodion* would be prominently displayed, one element of it at the start of each line. I am not suggesting that any sort of mechanical expansion did, in fact, ever occur; rather, the entire idea of the *Hymn to Apollo*, with its multiple innovations and pairings, embodies an expansion aesthetic that has been organically employed to make a long and interesting narrative, the fruit of generations of reworking various traditions. Such an expansion might even have occurred in the context of rhapsodic contests, as I suggested some years ago.²³ A second sort of expansion in this particular passage of the *Hymn* takes the conventional sign-off formula with ἀλλ' and lengthens it into a pivot passage: what sounds to be, at first hearing, a sign-off tag (at line 165) is then, after the internal expansion I have just outlined, re-doubled by the formulaic line *αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν οὐ λήξω ἐκηβόλον*

²² For full analysis of the Delian maidens' performance, see Peponi 2009.

²³ Martin 2000b.

Ἀπόλλωνα. Note that this, too, sounds at first like an *exodion*-style close; compare in the very same *Hymn to Apollo* the last lines:²⁴

Καὶ σὺ μὲν οὕτω χαῖρε Διὸς καὶ Λητοῦς νίε·
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ σεῖο καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομ' ἁοιδῆς.

To sum up: the *Hymn to Apollo*, in its pursuit of a conscious modelling of its protagonists (Apollo and the Chian poet) on citharodes, makes “citharodic” sounds at the key switch-over point in the middle of the composition, which is both an ending and a beginning. It is further worth noting that αὐτὰρ in this use is a perfect formulaic complement for ἀλλ(ά), because, while both are isosyllabic and of the same metrical shape, the latter ends with a vowel and can thus fit a range of line-initial metrical situations that cannot be accommodated by the former. The *Hymn to Apollo* passage shows us both complementary formulas at work, one backing up the other.

This is one passage, then, of a rhapsodic composition that gains highly relevant thematic resonance from a citharodic “feel” and rhetorical strategy. Before leaving the hymns to examine an epic moment, it is worthwhile pointing out another passage that may feature similar latent associations. In the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, the goddess encounters Anchises on Mt. Ida, alone in the cattle pen, while the other cowherds are out on the range. The goddess of love stands before him, disguised as a *parthenos*; as *eros* grips the young man, captivated by her wondrous shining beauty, he greets her and runs through a litany of possible divinities she resembles, ending with a promise to build an altar, and a prayer that he might receive from her fame, long life, and descendants. In light of the prayer and the divine interlocutor, it is unremarkable that Anchises begins his speech with the words Χαῖρε ἄνασσ' (92–99):

Χαῖρε ἄνασσ', ἣ τις μακάρων τάδε δώμαθ' ἰκάνεις,
Ἄρτεμις ἢ Λητώ ἢ ἐχρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη
ἢ Θέμις ἢ ὕγενῆς ἢ ἐγλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
ἢ ποῦ τις Χαρίτων δεῦρ' ἦλυθες, αἶ τε θεοῖσι
πᾶσιν ἔταιρίζουσι καὶ ἀθάνατοι καλέονται,
ἣ τις νυμφάων αἶ τ' ἄλσεα καλὰ νέμονται,
[ἣ νυμφῶν αἶ καλὸν ὄρος τόδε ναιετάουσι]
καὶ πηγὰς ποταμῶν καὶ πίσσα ποιήεντα.

²⁴ See similar phrasing at the end of the long *Hymn to Demeter* (495) and *Hymn to Hermes* (580) and at the end of nine of the shorter *Hymns* in the collection (Pan; Muses and Apollo; Artemis, etc.).

Hail, Lady, whichever of the blessed ones you are that arrive at this dwelling, Artemis or Leto or golden Aphrodite, high-born Themis or steely-eyed Athena; or perhaps you are one of the Graces come here, who are companions to all the gods and are called immortal; or one of the nymphs, who haunt the fair groves and the waters of rivers and the grassy meads. [trans. West 2003]

But an echo of the citharodic *exodion* would be perfectly apt, since the audience at this stage already knows what Anchises was doing when first approached by Aphrodite—namely, playing the kithara (76–80):

τὸν δ' εὗρε σταθμοῖσι λελειμμένον οἶον ἀπ' ἄλλων
 Ἀγχίσην ἦρωα θεῶν ἀπο κάλλος ἔχοντα.
 οἱ δ' ἅμα βουσὶν ἔποντο νομοὺς κάτα ποιήεντας
 πάντες, ὃ δὲ σταθμοῖσι λελειμμένος οἶος ἀπ' ἄλλων
 πωλεῖτ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα διαπρύσιον κιθαρίζων. 80

... and found him left all alone in the stading, the manly Anchises who had his beauty from the gods; the others were all following the cattle over the grassy pastures, while he, left all alone in the stading, was going about this way and that, playing loudly on a kithara. [trans. West 2003; slightly modified]

That is to say, the first words of Anchises to the goddess are also the *last* words of his song—his *exodion*. Perhaps, in a *mise en abyme* effect not unfamiliar to archaic Greek composers (one thinks of *Iliad* 9.186–91—Achilles singing to the phorminx while Patroclus waits), Anchises can be imagined as in the process of breaking off from singing to his kithara something like the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*. He is, after all, as a rustic singer who encounters a goddess in the wild (like Hesiod or Archilochus), himself a multiform; perhaps he performs a tale of one, as well.

Does Homeric epic ever echo the citharodic *exodion*—and why? Word-searches of the relevant diction turn up only one passage, but a particularly interesting one. The stylistic background has to be stated, first, in order for us to appreciate the peculiarity foregrounded by the scene in question. Of the ninety-three times that ἄναξ appears in Homeric poetry, only seventeen times does it function as vocative (i.e., as in the citharodic *exodion*). Seven out of those seventeen occur in addresses to Agamemnon (not surprising in view of his regular epithet ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων).²⁵ The only other

²⁵ Unusual as is the sequence ἀλλὰ ἄναξ, it might have been generated formulaically on the basis of two relevant templates (or their “preverbal Gestalt” to use Nagler’s helpful concept). The phrase “But, up now” occurs four times in Homer (e.g., *Iliad* 6.331: ἀλλ’ ἄνα μὴ τάχα ἄστρ’ πυρὸς δηΐοιο

mortals thus addressed are his brother Menelaus (*Iliad* 23.588), Odysseus (*Odyssey* 11.71), Teiresias (*Odyssey* 11.144), and Ajax (*Odyssey* 11.561). Six times gods are called upon with ἄναξ (Apollo: *Iliad* 16.514 and 523, *Odyssey* 8.339; Hypnos: *Iliad* 14.233; an unknown river god: *Odyssey* 5.445 and 450). Only in one passage in all of Homeric verse is this vocative introduced with the word ἀλλά (as in the *exodion*). This occurs as Nestor offers his advice to his leader (*Iliad* 2.360–68):

ἀλλὰ ἄναξ αὐτός τ' εὖ μήδεο πείθεό τ' ἄλλω· 360
οὐ τοι ἀπόβλητον ἔπος ἔσσεται ὅττι κεν εἶπω·
κῆρ' ἄνδρας κατὰ φύλα κατὰ φρήτρας Ἀγάμεμνον,
ὡς φρήτη φρήτηφιν ἀρήγη, φύλα δὲ φύλοις.
εἰ δέ κεν ὡς ἔρξης καὶ τοι πείθωνται Ἀχαιοί,
γνώσῃ ἔπειθ' ὅς θ' ἡγεμόνων κακὸς ὅς τέ νυ λαῶν 365
ἦδ' ὅς κ' ἐσθλὸς ἔησι· κατὰ σφέας γὰρ μαχέονται.
γνώσσαι δ' εἰ καὶ θεσπεσίῃ πόλιν οὐκ ἀλαπάξεις,
ἧ ἄνδρῶν κακότητι καὶ ἀφραδίῃ πολέμοιο.

Come, my lord: yourself be careful, and listen to another.
This shall not be a word to be cast away that I tell you.
Set your men in order by tribes, by clans, Agamemnon,
and let clan go in support of clan, let tribe support tribe.
If you do it this way, and the Achaians obey you,
you will see which of your leaders is bad, and which of your people,
and which also is brave, since they will fight in divisions,
and might learn also whether by magic you fail to take this
city, or by men's cowardice and ignorance of warfare. [trans.
Lattimore 2011]

θέρηται). This association would have provided a familiar sound-sequence upon which an innovative ἀλλὰ ἄναξ might be composed in performance, especially since the ἀλλ' ἄνα phrase features a homonym (ἄνα) of the rarer vocative form of ἄναξ (ἄνα), which occurs three times in Homer (always as vocative of Zeus, e.g., *Iliad* 3.351: Ζεῦ ἄνα δὸς τίσασθαι ὃ με πρότερος κάκ' ἔοργε). A more immediate source for the unique expression in *Iliad* 2.360 may be lines of the type attested twice in the *Odyssey*, in which the feminine form is used, addressing a goddess. At *Odyssey* 3.380, Nestor (again) is the speaker, in a prayer: ἀλλά, ἄνασσ', ὤληθι, δίδωθι δέ μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν. At *Odyssey* 6.175, Odysseus uses the same vocative phrase to address Nausicaa, whom he has compared to a goddess. In neither scene is a citharodic flavor detectable (although the entire scene is undoubtedly colored by poetry about choruses of young women, and Alcman may have composed a similar scene: cf. scholia HQ ad *Odyssey* 6.244ff [Dindorf]: αἱ γὰρ ἐμοὶ—ἐνθαδέ ναιετάων] ἄμφω μὲν ἀθετεῖ Ἀρίσταρχος, διστάζει δὲ περὶ τοῦ πρώτου, ἐπεὶ καὶ Ἀλκμᾶν αὐτὸν μετέβαλε παρθένους λεγούσας εἰσάγων “Ζεῦ πάτερ, αἱ γὰρ ἐμὸς πόσις εἴη”).

It is remarkable that this passage, which can be pinpointed nowadays through searching digitized texts, on the basis of its otherwise unattested sequence ἀλλὰ ἄναξ, was already singled out for comment in the twelfth century (perhaps recalling earlier, no longer extant analyses) by Eustathius. For this is the precise point in his massive commentary when the Homeric scholar chooses to make the remark with which I began this paper:

(v. 360) Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ “ἀλλ’ ἄναξ,” ὅπερ ἐνταῦθα παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ κεῖται, ἀρχὴ τις ἐξοδίου κιθαρωδικοῦ τὸ “ἀλλὰ ἀλλ’ ἄναξ,” ὡς ἰστορεῖ Αἰλῖος Διονύσιος.

Note that from “but lord” which is here found in the poet, the beginning of a citharodic *exodion* [comes], the [phrase] “but [other things?] lord,” as Aelius Dionysius relates ...

Perhaps as both bishop and master rhetorician, Eustathius was hypersensitive to forms of address and prayer-style. Or, it could be that his well-trained literary ear detected the unusual combination. He does not give an opinion as to whether the strong resemblance to the citharodic *exodion* in this (and only this) line in all of Homer means anything. But I believe we can indeed make a claim for several latent associations. First, it should be recognized that the overall structure of Nestor’s speech (*Iliad* 2.336–68) places the vocative appeal at the proper location for an *exodion*-like close. Eight lines from the end of his intervention, it comes as he turns from comments more generally aimed at the reluctant troops of the Achaeans toward a final address to Agamemnon. The first part of his speech, moreover, functions like the *hypomnesis* of a prayer. The content, as well, has an overtly religious dimension, as the aged warrior reminds the Achaeans of the vows they undertook, with solemn libations, to conquer Troy. If they return to Argos now, it will be a denial of faith in the promises of Zeus, sealed with his own signs of thunder and lightning as they set out on the expedition (348–53). Unlike the usual prayer-style, Nestor does not match the *hypomnesis* with a wish for future blessings: rather than saying simply “just as you promised ... so now act,” he expands on the rhetorical formula to say “so now do not go until requiting Helen’s woes” (354–56). The final prayer or wish is then directed to Agamemnon (not the troops): he should marshall the troops, marking them off (κρίν’) by tribe and clan. This, too, has a religious function, for in this manner it will be possible to tell, says Nestor, whether failure to succeed comes through a divinity’s will (θεσπεσίη) or human insufficiency.

Kirk in his commentary notes that Nestor's frequent tactical advice "tends to be expressed in untraditional language" (1985, 154). One wonders whether Nestor's style is *generically* different, and if that reflects in turn an affiliation with a different mode of singing the tales of past generations—something more akin to citharody. Nestor is, after all, a survivor of battles that are for the current Trojan War warriors the events of long ago; with these tales he entertains and instructs his most recent hearers.²⁶ Another angle of vision would allow us to see in the content and style of Nestor's instructions to Agamemnon in Book 2 a more specifically Apolline directivity. The god who points out how things should be, whether the route of roads or the places for colonies, is also the quintessential god of *nomos* and properly honored with citharodic *nomoi*, just as he plays them himself while leading the chorus (cf. Pindar *Nemean* 5.24–25).²⁷ In the *Hymn to Apollo* the functions of leader of a chorus, giver of orders (to the Cretan sailors, his intended priests), and player of the kithara converge (*Hymn to Apollo* 513–43). Apollo's concern for the *phula* of mortals who will come to his temple (cf. identical line-end formula in *Hymn to Apollo* 537 and 538: $\phi\tilde{\upsilon}\lambda' \text{ } \alpha\eta\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omega\nu$) is not quite the same as Nestor's for the *phula* of the army that he would order into place, but the overlap in diction, given the other contextual markers, is interesting.

Also of interest is the afterlife of such language in similar religious contexts. Several centuries after the period in which the Homeric hymn likely crystallized into the form in which we have it, another Apolline figure—Isyllus of Epidaurus—undertook to order the worship for Apollo Maleatas and Asclepius. In the hexameter portion of his foundational paeanic hymn, the diction of the Nestor's advice in the passage we have been analyzing comes together with instructions for the proper celebration of his god:

Τόνδ' ἱερὸν θεαίαι μοῖραι νόμον ἤϋρεν Ἴσυλλος	10
ἄφθιτον ἀέναον γέρας ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν,	
καί νιν ἅπας δᾶμος θεθμὸν θέτο πατρίδος ἀμᾶς,	
χεῖρας ἀνασχόντες μακάρεσσιν ἐς οὐρανὸν εὐρύ[ν	
οἳ κεν ἀριστεύωσι πόλῃος τᾶσδ' Ἐπιδαύρου	
λέξασθαί τ' ἄνδρας καὶ ἐπαγγεῖλαι κατὰ φυλὰς	15
οἷς πολιοῦχος ὑπὸ στέρονοις ἀρετά τε καὶ αἰδώς,	
τοῖσιν ἐπαγγέλλεν καὶ πομπεύεν σφε κομῶντας	

²⁶ On the depths of tradition hidden in the stories by and about Nestor, see now Frame 2009.

²⁷ On the ancient associations between the two meanings of *nomos* ("law" and "musical mode"), see Ford 2002, 260.

Φοῖβῳ ἄνακτι νιῶ τ' Ἀσκληπιῷ ἱατῆρι
 εἵμασιν ἐν λευκοῖσι δάφνας στεφάνοις ποτ' Ἀπόλλω,
 ποῖ δ' Ἀσκληπιὸν ἔρνεσι ἐλαίας ἡμεροφύλλου 20
 ἀγνῶς πομπεύειν, καὶ ἐπεύχεσθαι πολιάταις
 πᾶσιν ἀεὶ διδόμεν τέκνοις τ' ἐρατὰν ὑγίειαν,
 εὐνομίαν τε καὶ εἰρήναν καὶ πλοῦτον ἀμεμφῇ,
 τὰν καλοκαγαθίαν τ' Ἐπιδαυροῖ ἀεὶ ῥέπεν ἀνδρῶν,
 ὥραις ἐξ ὥρᾶν νόμον ἀεὶ τόνδε σέβοντας 25
 οὕτω τοί κ' ἁμῶν περιφείδοιτ' εὐρύοπα Ζεύς.²⁸

This law, sacred by divine Fate, Isyllus composed, an imperishable, everlasting gift to the immortal gods; and all the people, lifting their hands to the wide heaven, to the blessed gods, set it up as a binding rule of our fatherland: to select and to summon by tribes whichever men may be best in this city of Epidaurus, those who have in their hearts virtue and reverence that safeguard the city; to summon them and to have them lead a procession to lord Phoebus and to his son Asclepius, the physician, dressed in white raiment and with flowing hair; to lead a solemn procession to the temple of Apollo bearing garlands of laurel and then to the temple of Asclepius bearing branches of tender olive shoots; to pray them to grant forever to all citizens and to their children fair health and to grant that the noble character of the men of Epidaurus always prevail, together with good order and peace and blameless wealth from season to season so long as they revere this law. So may Zeus the far-seeing spare us.

Obviously a careful student of epic-style hexameters, Isyllus may have heard in the unusual phrasing that the Homeric poet gives Nestor at *Iliad* 2.360–63 a reminiscence of Apolline citharodic ethos.

Rhapsodic Practice—An Intermezzo

As we turn to the alleged rhapsodic *exodion* (νῦν δὲ θεοὶ μάκαρες τῶν ἐσθλῶν ἄφθονοὶ ἐστε) preserved by Photius and Eustathius, it is not necessary to dwell on its similarity to hymnic or prayer formulations. The same strictures apply as with the citharodic: that is, more contextual clues need to be sought in order to face the objection that certain dictional items are

²⁸ IG IV²128; Furley and Bremer 2001, 180–92; translation by Edelstein and Edelstein 1945. For an analysis of the innovations in this poem, see LeVen 2014, 312–28.

generally hymnic, and not specifically attached to resonances of rhapsodic practice. We can, however, make one perhaps noteworthy distinction right off, in contrasting it with the citharodic closing. Whereas that tag-line called on one god (probably Apollo, given the lore about citharodic contests) and bade him “rejoice/farewell” (*khaire*), leaving unspecified the further prayer for benefits, the rhapsodic *exodion* calls on *all* the gods (θεοὶ μάκαρες) and embeds in the same hexameter line the request for good things (*esthla*) in abundance. It is purely speculative to imagine that the context of rhapsodic contests called for a less specialized appeal, spreading out the set of addressees and pluralizing it as “blessed gods” rather than one. Of course, we might expect the Panathenaea to inspire poets to end their contest-pieces with appeals specifically to Athena—but these are not, to my knowledge, attested, apart from the two short *Homeric Hymns* addressed to her (#11 and #28, Allen-Sikes-Halliday). On the other hand, the very existence of such a varied range of hexameter prooimia as we find in the *Hymns* is itself a kind of confirmation that travelling, competing rhapsodes needed to be prepared for whatever divinity was most prominent in the cities they visited—a picture that fits well with that of the widely-ranging “Chian” bard in the *Hymn to Apollo*, as also with the portraits of Homer and Hesiod in the *Lives* and the *Certamen*.

It must be noted immediately that, just as with the citharodic *exodion*, the rhapsodic is in fact never attested verbatim in those extant texts that we have reason to believe rhapsodes may once have performed. This includes not just Homer and Hesiod, but also Archilochus, Stesichorus, and other “lyric” poets. By itself, the formula θεοὶ μάκαρες is a common one, occurring thirty times in Homeric poetry and sixteen times in Hesiod (including transformations into other grammatical cases). Here there are some revealing details. Only four times does it occur (as in the *exodion*) in the vocative, all in the same formulaic line in the *Odyssey* (Ζεῦ πάτερ ἦδ’ ἄλλοι μάκαρες θεοὶ αἰὲν ἑόντες). At *Odyssey* 5.7, Athena uses this line to preface her call for the gods to aid Odysseus; at *Odyssey* 8.306, Hephaestus calls the gods to witness his errant wife with Ares in bed; and at *Odyssey* 12.371 and 377, Helios calls for Odysseus’ crew to be punished for devouring his cattle. The usage is strikingly specific and consistent: in each passage, one divinity seeks justice from the rest of the community of gods.²⁹ Thinking of the possible resonances if we import *into* the poem what we know of this framing *exodion*,

²⁹ The context reminds us that Diogenianus (*Centuria* 6.88), mentioned above, cites as proverbially said in the case of vengeance the phrase νῦν θεοὶ μάκαρες.

it is difficult to see in specific passages any tonal connection with the rhapsode's closing call for *esthla* from the blessed gods. On the other hand, if we *export* to the rhapsodic *exodion* the specific tone and situation found through *internal* analysis of the epic, it could be significant that the call νῦν δὲ θεοὶ μάκαρες τῶν ἐσθλῶν ἄφθονοὶ ἐστε places in the mouth of a human singer what the audience will have recognized, at least in poems known to us, as divine speech. If this is the register of the line, then the competing rhapsodic poet will have elevated himself to a level above his audience, in what might be a relic of (or aspiration to) a vatic or sacral poetic function.³⁰

Only once in hexameter verse before the late antique poet Nonnus does the adjective ἄφθονος appear. This occurs not in adjacency to the formula θεοὶ μάκαρες but in a telling passage that does have a relationship to gifts of the divine. The passage, I shall argue, takes on new shades of meaning, when we recall that the Hesiodic *Works and Days* was regularly performed by rhapsodes.³¹ The description of the Golden Age emphasizes the abundance of grain available to the χρύσειον γένος that enjoyed a god-like existence under the reign of Cronus (*Works and Days* 109–12). Their death was like sleep, and the earth bore for them an *unstinting* harvest (116–26):

θνήσκον δ' ὥσθ' ὕπνῳ δεδμημένοι ἐσθλὰ δὲ πάντα
 τοῖσιν ἔην καρπὸν δ' ἔφερε ζεῖδωρος ἄρουρα
 αὐτομάτῃ πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον οἱ δ' ἐθελημοὶ
 ἦσυχον ἔργ' ἐνέμοντο σὺν ἐσθλοῖσιν πολέεσσιν. 119
 ἀφνειοὶ μῆλοισι, φίλοι μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τοῦτο γένος κατὰ γαῖα κάλυψε,
 τοὶ μὲν δαίμονες εἰσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλὰς
 ἐσθλοὶ, ἐπιχθόνιοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,
 οἳ ῥα φυλάσσουσιν τε δίκας καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα
 ἡέρα ἐσσάμενοι πάντῃ φοιτῶντες ἐπ' αἶαν, 125
 πλουτοδότην καὶ τοῦτο γέρας βασιλῆιον ἔσχον.

... and they died as if overpowered by sleep. They had all good things: the grain-giving field bore crops of its own accord, much and unstinting, and they themselves, willing, mild-mannered, shared out the fruits of their labors together with many good things, wealthy in sheep, dear to the blessed gods. But since the earth covered up this race, by the plans of great Zeus they are

³⁰ Cf. Mondy 1978 for comparative evidence concerning Indic masters of speech (heralds) and their function as sacrificial officials.

³¹ The main evidence for rhapsodic performance of Hesiod is Plato *Ion* 531.

fine spirits upon the earth, guardians of mortal human beings: they watch over judgments and cruel deeds, clad in invisibility, walking everywhere upon the earth, givers of wealth; and this kingly honor they received. [trans. Most 2007]

As Gregory Nagy eloquently argued thirty years ago, the Golden generation (along with the Silver) represents a poetically stylized version of heroes as they appear in cult.³² Let us note, in relation to the rhapsodic *exodion* and the specific association we have seen of the vocative θεοὶ μάκαρες with just vengeance in the *Odyssey*, that the Golden Age *daimones* as presented by Hesiod are specifically called defenders of justice (124). They are marked, further, by *having* good things and *being* good themselves (119, 123). In other words, we have overt or latent associations within this short passage of the Golden Age heroes, with the “gods,” givers of abundance and *esthla*, as addressed in the vocative of the *exodion*.³³ Finally, it is worth noting that—as Nagy has once more shown—the Golden Age is described in terms that make it a multiform of the Age of Heroes a few lines later in Hesiod (170–73):³⁴

καὶ τοὶ μὲν ναίουσιν ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες 170
ἐν μακάρων νήσοισι παρ’ Ὀκεανὸν βαθυδίνην,
ὄλβιοι ἥρωες, τοῖσιν μελιηδέα καρπὸν
τρὶς ἔτεος θάλλοντα φέρει ξείδωρος ἄρουρα.

... and these dwell with a spirit free of care on the Islands of the Blessed beside deep-eddying Ocean—happy heroes, for whom the grain-giving field bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing three times a year. [trans. Most 2007]

The lucky heroes of this latter, fourth age, also beneficiaries of abundant crops, dwell blissfully in the Isles of the Blessed (also under the rule of Cronus).³⁵ In this multiform of the Golden Age, we therefore have the specific verbal link with θεοὶ μάκαρες of the *exodion*. What is to be made of these indications?

I submit that we can now distinguish the citharodic *exodion* more sharply from the rhapsodic, in a way that takes into account, and makes more sense

³² See Nagy 1999b [1979], 151–222 for the extended argument.

³³ For gods (generally) as givers of good things, see *Hymn to Demeter* 224: καὶ σὺ γύναι μάλα χαῖρε, θεοὶ δέ τοι ἐσθλὰ πόρροισιν (the ironic reply of the goddess to Metaneira).

³⁴ Nagy 1999b, 167–73.

³⁵ On the positioning here and import of the lines concerning Cronus found in some mss., see West 1978, 195–96.

of, performance contexts and the relative expressive positionings of the poet (singer or reciter). The citharodic *exodion* clearly calls upon a god—as we have seen, most likely Apollo, and probably was used in the context of festivals like the Pythia at Delphi and Karneia at Sparta. By extrapolation, the negotiation of the poetic performance is like that of sacrifice, prayer, and hymn: once praised, the god now should rejoice (and, implicitly, be favorable). The rhapsodic *exodion*, by contrast, is more specific about the overt request for abundance of good things, and its addressee is plural—the θεοὶ μάκαρες. But I suggest that these “blessed” ones are in fact *the heroes whose exploits are described within epic*. Functionally, citharodic and rhapsodic compositions work in a quite similar manner, to fashion a verbal *agalma* that attracts attention and triggers generous repayment from divinities (and perhaps from patrons—another dimension). But formally, the citharodic compositions will have focused on the exploits of the *god*—just as the *polukephalos nomos* that was a required contest-piece at the Pythia narrated the initiatory and foundational exploit of Apollo’s killing of the Python.³⁶ In contrast, the rhapsodic poems thematize mortal, *heroic* exploits—that is, the deeds of heroes notionally “before” they become immortalized in song or cult. But the framework for performance of such epics is, naturally, the post-epic world of the Iron Age in which the epic heroes, the *daimones*—in the form of θεοὶ μάκαρες—can be worshipped and asked for blessings in abundance: νῦν δὲ θεοὶ μάκαρες τῶν ἐσθλῶν ἄφθονοὶ ἔστε. From the standpoint of the Greek audience for rhapsodic performances, the heroic protagonists of epic narrative exist still, as real cultic presences in the landscape, πλουτοδόται—“wealth-providers.” To recite their exploits is to gain their favor. (A number of close parallels from ancient and modern Indic epic tradition might be adduced here.³⁷) Even if a city-state sponsors the recitation (as at the Panathenaea), the heroic boon, now extended to a broader community, is still the aim and endpoint. As Nagy continually reminds us—myth and poetry in ancient Greece are inextricable from ritual performance. In a very real sense, reciting Homeric epic is itself a ritual act. The long-neglected *exodion* of the rhapsodes encapsulates this fact.

³⁶ Details in West 1992, 213–15.

³⁷ See, e.g., Claus 1989 and Kothari 1989 on the relation of local epics, within the Tulu and Rajasthan traditions, to communication with the deified dead.

End-Piece: The “Komic” *Exodion*

As we have seen, the citharodic and rhapsodic *exodia* preserved by the lexicographical tradition are never found verbatim in poetic compositions, but tracing fragments of them can help us to see more links between text and context, ritual and performance. The *exodion* identified as “comic” offers at first sight a bleaker prospect for philological progress. To begin with, by both Photius and Eustathius, we are given only one word as a clue, “having a beautiful crown”:

ὥσπερ κωμικοῦ μὲν ἦδε “καλλιστέφανος,” ῥαψωδῶν δὲ “νῦν δὲ θεοὶ μάκαρες τῶν ἐσθλῶν ἄφθονοὶ ἔστε.” [Photius *Lexicon* α 987]

ὥς ἱστορεῖ Αἴλιος Διονύσιος, ὥσπερ, φησί κωμικοῦ μὲν ἦδε “καλλιστέφανος,” ῥαψωδοῦ δὲ αὕτη “νῦν δὲ θεοὶ μάκαρες τῶν ἐσθλῶν ἄφθονοὶ ἔστε,” τραγικοῦ δὲ “πολλὰ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων.” [Eustathius *Ad Homeri Iliadem* 1:364.6]

In our extant comic texts (from the 152 authors compiled in the *Canon* of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*), the adjective appears once—or so it seems. Actually, the citation from Demianczuk’s *Supplementum Comicum* (1912) printed as #48 of his *Fragmenta incertae comoediae* and reading “ἦδε καλλιτέφανος” is, of course, derived from the lexicographers, so we end up in a perfect textual circle. Furthermore, the old *supplementum* citation perpetuates a misunderstanding of the lexicographers’ syntax (a construction that may have stemmed from Aelius Dionysius himself), a misconstrual also found in editions of Photius (but not Eustathius), by intruding into the quoted *exodion* the deictic ἦδε, which clearly was part of the scholars’ own prose transmitting the poetic tag-line, rather than a piece of the *exodion*.³⁸ So we are left empty-handed.

There are plenty of crowns in comedy—the noun *stephanos* (uncompounded) and related verb forms occur at least 100 times—but these, too, offer barely a foothold for analysis. As one of the most abundant and visible semiotic markers in ancient social life, crowns crop up at symposia, as signs of festivity, at sacrifices, as dedicatory objects, and even as funeral bier adornments. Worshippers at the Thesmophoria, the Dionysia, and Eleusinian mysteries, were said to wear crowns of myrtle. The Pythia’s tripod at Delphi was adorned with a laurel crown. Brides and grooms wore crowns: since comedy sometimes ends with a wedding, should we look to such final

³⁸ Kassel and Austin correct the error: PCG vol. 8 (1995) 67, #181.

marriage scenes? (Unfortunately, even if crowns were part of the actors' costumes at, for instance, the wedding marking the end of the *Birds*, the word is never used in the text and we would have to fill in stage directions ourselves.) And of course winning athletes wore crowns. This last context, given the competitive nature of all the poetic events featuring *exodia*, deserves further investigation.

As it turns out, in three Aristophanic passages, the connection of crown and victory can help us explore more relevant background. It has to be admitted, however, that only two are *exodia* passages, while only one features a crown (not the passage in the *exodion* position). The one involving a send-off that features a crown and a victory song comes in the *Knights* some 200 lines before the play's end. The Sausage-Seller has finally defeated Paphlagon to become the new favorite of the Demos, who in turn regrets having ever crowned and endowed his previous demagogic favorite and tells him to surrender his *stephanos* (*Knights* 1225–28). After some further comic exchange about the fulfillment of a fatal oracle, Paphlagon exits on the *ekuklema* in paratragic fashion (*Knights* 1250–56):

Paphlagon:

ὦ στέφανε, χαίρων ἄπιθι· καί σ' ἄκων ἐγὼ
λείπω· σὲ δ' ἄλλος τις λαβὼν κερτήσεται,
κλέπτῃς μὲν οὐκ ἂν μάλλον, εὐτυχῆς δ' ἴσως.

Sausage-seller:

Ἑλλάνιε Ζεῦ, σὸν τὸ νικητήριον.

Slave:

ὦ χαῖρε, καλλίνικε, καὶ μέμνησ' ὅτι
ἀνὴρ γεγένησαι δι' ἐμέ·

Paphlagon:

Begone and farewell my crown; against my will do I abandon you.
Some other man will take you as his own, no greater thief but luckier
perhaps.

Sausage-seller:

Zeus of the Hellenes, yours the prize of victory!

Slave:

Hail, fair victor, and bear in mind that you became a big shot thanks to me.
[trans. Henderson]

The *Acharnians* ends with a similar scene of defeat, when Dicaeopolis (*Acharnians* 1224–25) calls to be taken to the judges of the Choes drinking-contest (and by metatheatrical extension, those judging the *Lenaea*

competition in the *hic et nunc* of performance), while his opponent Lamachus is taken offstage. He returns triumphant, having drained his cup first, and breaks into a victory cry (1227–34):

Δι.	ὁρᾶτε τουτονὶ κενόν. τήνελλα καλλίνικος.	
Χο.	τήνελλα δῆτ', εἵπερ καλεῖς γ', ὃ πρέσβυ, καλλίνικος.	
Δι.	καὶ πρὸς γ' ἄκρατον ἐγγέας ἄμυστιν ἐξέλαψα.	
Χο.	τήνελλά νυν, ὃ γεννάδα χῶρει λαβὼν τὸν ἄσκον.	1230
Δι.	ἔπεσθέ νυν ἄδοντες “ὃ τήνελλα καλλίνικος.”	
Χο.	ἀλλ' ἐψόμεσθα σὴν χάριν τήνελλα καλλίνικον ἄ- δοντες σὲ καὶ τὸν ἄσκον.	

<i>Dicaeopolis</i>	Look, this pitcher's empty cup! Hail the Champion!
<i>Chorus</i>	Hail then—since you bid me, old sir—the Champion!
<i>Dicaeopolis</i>	And what's more, I poured the wine neat and chugged it straight down!
<i>Chorus</i>	Then Hail, old chap! Take the wineskin and go.
<i>Dicaeopolis</i>	Then follow me, singing “Hail the Champion”
<i>Chorus</i>	Yes, we'll follow in your honor singing “Hail the Champion” for you and your wineskin. [trans. Henderson]

Dicaeopolis announces his victory with the traditional cry that we have already heard accompanying the transfer of the crown in the *Knights*. There is no crown mentioned at this moment in the *Acharnians* (although we might imagine that Dicaeopolis as a symposiast at the Anthesteria is wearing one). What starts as a triumphal interjection is then turned by both the protagonist and the chorus into a song as they exit the orchestra (1231: ἄδοντες). This same song-phrase τήνελλα καλλίνικος also concludes the *Birds*, as Peisetaerus leads his bride Basileia (beautifully crowned?) offstage to the triumphal paean of the chorus (*Birds* 1763–65):

Χο. ἀλαλααί, ἰὴ παιών,
δαιμόνων ὑπέρτατε. τήνελλα καλλίνικος, ὃ

Thus far we have seen three send-off scenes, two of them at the position of an *exodion*, all marked with the language of the victory song (and one—although not an *exodion*—with an overt reference to crowning). But such circumstantial evidence does not seem quite enough to make a firm connection with the alleged *exodion* phrase καλλιστέφανος. The scholia to the end of the *Birds*, however, provide some further information that can help

narrow the gap between our texts and the lexicographic evidence. From the commentary (*Scholia ad Aves* 1764) we learn—with some confusion—the deeper history of the τήνελλα καλλίνικος song:

Τὸ τήνελλα μίμησις ἐστι φωνῆς κρούματος αὐλοῦ ποιᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ
ἐφυμνίου οὗ εἶπεν Ἀρχίλοχος εἰς τὸν Ἡρακλέα μετὰ τὸν ἄθλον
Αὐγέου

“τήνελλα ὦ καλλίνικε,
χαῖρε ἄναξ Ἡράκλεες,
αὐτός τε κίόλαος, αἰχμητὰ δύο.”

δοκεῖ δὲ πρῶτος Ἀρχίλοχος νικήσας ἐν Πάρῳ τὸν Δῆμητρος ὕμνον
ἐαυτῷ τοῦτον ἐπιτεφωνηκέναι.

“Tenella” is an imitation of a type of sound from the playing of the pipe, from the hymn-refrain [*ephumnion*] that Archilochus addressed to Heracles after the Aegean contest:

“Tenella, O fair-victory
Hail lord Herakles
Yourself and Iolaos, two spear-fighters.”

It seems that Archilochus first having been victor in the Demeter hymn in Paros added this interjection for himself.

Worth noting, first off, is the detail that the τήνελλα song is marked as having a double performance heritage, even in this compact rendition of its history. It was both a declaration celebrating personal victory in a hymn contest (a scenario similar to its use by Dicaeopolis in *Acharnians*) and part of a praise-song for Heracles. The time dimensions, relative and absolute, are vague. Is Archilochus imagined to have been present at the victory of Heracles, or simply to have recalled it? And was he the *first ever* to win the Demeter hymn-contest (as Chrysothemis had been first at Delphi to win the Apollo-hymn event)? Or, did he win the hymn-contest *first*, and then compose the praise verses? And do we get here a glimpse of an Archilochus as citharode? (If so, the phrase χαῖρε ἄναξ might recall the citharodic *exodion*.) The association of Archilochus with the Parian Demeter cult is attested in other sources, as well, so this may be the place to note that the second-earliest occurrence of the rare adjective καλλιστέφανος is as an epithet of Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn* dedicated to her (*Hymn to Demeter* 251, 295). (The very earliest would be the late eighth-century BCE Nestor’s Cup inscription, where the epithet modifies the name of Aphrodite.) If we can imagine Archilochus’s own hymn to Demeter as featuring this epithet, then the phrase καλλίνικε applied to

himself would have been a nice compliment and ending to the body of the hymn, in effect playing on *her* crown within the narrative to draw attention to *his own* (crowned?) victory after singing the praise narrative.

The scholia to Pindar present us with even more dizzying possibilities. They comment extensively on the first lines of Pindar's *Olympian* 9, which begins with a reference to the Archilochean composition:

Τὸ μὲν Ἀρχιλόχου μέλος
 φωνᾶεν Ὀλυμπίᾳ,
 καλλίνικος ὁ τριπλὸς κεχλαδῶς
 ἄρκεσε Κρόνιον παρ' ὄχθον ἀγεμονεῦσαι
 κωμάζοντι φίλοις Ἐφαρμόστῳ σὺν ἑταίροις

The resounding strain of Archilochus,
 the swelling thrice-repeated song of triumph,
 sufficed to lead Epharmostus to the hill of Cronus,
 in victory-procession with his dear companions. [trans. Svarlien]

In addition to what we have learned from the scholia to the *Birds*, the Pindaric poem pins down the place of performance to Olympia, refers to a triplex singing, and uses the apparently impromptu short song as a foil for Pindar's own epinician praises. Note also that the short song is said to be sufficient for the victor Epharmostus as he celebrates in a *kômos* with his friends. We shall return to this setting shortly.

Clearly the song was of great interest to ancient scholars whose notes were absorbed into the Byzantine commentary tradition. The key information contained within the *scholia vetera* to *Olympian* 9.1 can be summed up as follows, with my further notations in brackets, pointing to some curious gaps:

Archilochus having come to Olympia made the verses to Heracles [unstated: why and when]. Because he lacked a citharode, Archilochus spoke the word τήνελλα and thereby imitated the tune (or rhythm and sound) of the kithara in the midst of the chorus, while the chorus said the rest of the words καλλίνικε χαῖρε ἄναξ Ἡράκλεις; thereafter anyone lacking a citharode used the τήνελλα [this assumes that normal celebratory song at Olympia was citharodic]. Alternatively: during an evening *kômos* celebrating the victor, if an aulete could not be found, one of the victor's companions would sing τήνελλα [the confusion over which instrument was imitated recalls the use in the *Birds* scholion of the term *krouma* for the sound of the aulos, a term usually applied to kithara playing]. The victor acted as *exarchos* for the song,

as he processed in *kômos* with friends to the altar of Zeus. The phrase and short song came to be used to celebrate all victors.

A few more lines in the *scholia vetera* attribute to Eratosthenes (apparently, the Alexandrian librarian; p. 226 Bernhardt) more specific information about genre. The Hellenistic scholar said that the melos of Archilochus was not an epinikion but a hymn to Heracles; that Pindar called it *triploos* because the phrase *kallinike* used to be repeated three times; and that the word *τήνελλα* was said by the exarchos “apart from the tune” (ἔξω τοῦ μέλους), whenever either citharist [note: not citharode] or aulete was not present. The chorus of komasts then added their “fair-victory” cry so that the whole line was created through this collaboration: *τήνελλα καλλίνικε*. The actual *arkhê* of the hymn was the next line (*χαῖρε ἄναξ Ἡράκλεες*). It seems that Eratosthenes is trying to reconcile competing claims about exactly which instrumental sound was replaced by *τήνελλα*, the *epiphônêma* of Archilochus. I would add the suggestion that these competing claims most likely went back to performers’ lore about the invention of their own repertoires, and were shaped further by the competing claims of festivals such as the Pythia, Karneia, and Panathenaea. We know about the Pythia, for instance, that stories circulated concerning why certain major poets could not compete: Hesiod, for example, had not learned how to sing to the kithara (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 10.7.3—see also above). In short, a pre-Hellenistic genre-sorting process that must have aligned *recited* verse (Hesiodic, Archilochean) in contradistinction to *sung* poetry probably underlies the “evolution” of Archilochus in lore from (apparently citharodic) hymn singer to impromptu *kômos* leader lacking an instrument to accompany himself. At the same time, as the Hellenistic-era Mnesiepes inscription commemorates, Archilochus could be remembered as a lyre-player and singer, who acquired his instrument directly from the Muses.³⁹

Let us return to the problem of the “comic” *exodion*. By now it has taken a slight twist. Tracing the roots of the *καλλίνικε* song segment that marks a turning point in the *Knights* and provides an *exodion*-like moment for the end of *Acharnians* and *Birds*, we can see that—even without mentioning crowns—the song-event thereby evoked within comedy is, in fact, komastic. To put this another way, we might read into the wording of Aelius Dionysius and the lexicographical tradition (*κωμικοῦ μὲν ἦδε καλλιστέφανος*) the root-meaning “belonging to the *kômos*.” Of course, in context, the “comic”

³⁹ Clay 2004, 14–16.

is meant (clearly contrasted with the “tragic” closing also mentioned in the *lexica*), but this *καλλίνικε*-song practice, when we put it into the context of Olympian competitive culture with its musical and poetic traditions, reveals itself to be, rather, “komic.” It is as if, in the use of the *καλλίνικε*-ending, Aristophanic comedy—at least in some productions (just as Euripides confined the “tragic” *exodion* to a few plays, of which we know)—gestured toward the pre-dramatic origins of his own art-form, affirming the affiliation between Archilochean iambus and Old Comedy.⁴⁰

At the same time, we need to consider whether the *καλλίνικε*-ending always carried with it a latent association with athletic games—specifically (as far as the sources tell us) the Olympian. Does it mean something for characters in an Aristophanic comedy—Dicaeopolis and Peisetaerus—to be escorted from the orchestra at play’s end by a komastic chorus to the sound of a victory-song that the audience must have known well to be for Olympic victors? Or for the Sausage-Seller to be greeted as if he had won the pancration or other event? Once more, we face the analytical dilemma of how to prioritize layers, as when we dealt with hymnic language above: were certain phrasings, like *καλλίνικε*, more vaguely triumphal, and only thought of as athletic when an obvious Olympic context called for it? We might flip the question the other way round: could it be that the proclamation by Dicaeopolis, after his victory in the compulsory drinking contest of the Choes, points to a genre-specific transmission of the *καλλίνικε* formula, *without* reference to the Olympic games? Even in that case, there would still be an interesting overlay of meanings. The Anthesteria (the Dionysiac wine festival in which the “Pots” segment, Choes, took place on the second day) is in this way being consciously melded into the Dionysia and Lenaea (distinct festivals at Athens), and the “pre-dramatic” but highly komastic rites of the former are being signaled, stylized, and incorporated through the snatch of the *exodion*-like triumph-song, into the *hic et nunc* of dramatic production (in the case of *Acharnians*, at the Lenaea of 425 BCE).

A third layering of signification cannot be ruled out. Indeed, there is one remaining body of evidence that may prove relevant to the question of the missing *καλλιστέφανος exodion* for comedies. It might, in fact, bring together the komastic, Olympic, and dramatic celebrations, with an Athenian focus. One fact that can be discovered through an otherwise unrewarding search for significant uses of *καλλιστέφανος* in the corpus of Greek literature has to do with an unusually specific naming practice, reported by scholiasts,

⁴⁰ Rosen 1988 remains fundamental for this connection.

Pausanias, and Aristotle. The scholion (1d Drachmann) to Pindar's *Olympian* 8, glossing the word *khrosostephanos*, informs us that the olive tree from which leaves were used to crown Olympic victors was named "fair-crown": ἡ διδομένη τοῖς νικῶσιν ἐλαία καλλιστέφανος καλεῖται. Similar information comes from Pausanias, who further provides the exact location of the famous tree (*Description of Greece* 5.15.3):

κατὰ δὲ τὸν ὀπισθόδομον μάλιστα ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ πεφυκὼς κότινος· καλεῖται δὲ ἐλαία *Καλλιστέφανος*, καὶ τοῖς νικῶσι τὰ Ὀλύμπια καθέστηκεν ἀπ' αὐτῆς δίδοσθαι τοὺς στεφάνους. Τούτου πλησίον τοῦ κοτίνου πεποιήται Νύμφαις βωμός· *Καλλιστεφάνους* ὀνομάζουσι καὶ ταύτας.

About opposite the rear chamber [of the Temple of Zeus] a wild olive is growing on the right. It is called the *Olive of the Beautiful Crown*, and from its leaves are made the crowns which it is customary to give to winners of Olympic contests. Near this wild olive stands an altar of Nymphs; these too are styled *Nymphs of the Beautiful Crowns*. [trans. Jones and Ormerod]

We should note at this point that tree and nymphs share the epithet—just as we have seen it applied to a goddess (Demeter in the *Hymn* to her). In the work attributed to Aristotle called *On Marvellous Things Heard*, an account is given of the progenitor of this Olympic sacred olive tree (51):

Ἐν τῷ Πανθεῖῳ ἐστὶν ἐλαία, καλεῖται δὲ καλλιστέφανος· ταύτης πάντα τὰ φύλλα ταῖς λοιπαῖς ἐλαίαις ἐναντία πέφυκεν ἔξω γὰρ ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐντὸς ἔχει τὰ χλωρά. ἀφίησί τε τοὺς πτόρθους ὥσπερ ἡ μύρτος εἰς τοὺς στεφάνους συμμέτρως. ἀπὸ ταύτης φυτὸν λαβὼν ὁ Ἡρακλῆς ἐφύτευσεν Ὀλυμπίαν, ἀφ' ἧς οἱ στέφανοι τοῖς ἀθληταῖς δίδονται. ἔστι δὲ αὕτη παρὰ τὸν Ἰλισσὸν ποταμόν, σταδίους ἐξήκοντα τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἀπέχουσα περιφκοδόμηται δέ, καὶ ζημία μεγάλη τῷ θιγόντι αὐτῆς ἐστίν. ἀπὸ ταύτης δὲ τὸ φυτὸν λαβόντες ἐφύτευσαν Ἡλεῖοι ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ, καὶ τοὺς στεφάνους ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἔδωκαν.

In the Pantheon there is an olive-tree, which is called that of the beautiful crowns. But all its leaves are contrary in appearance to those of other olive-trees; for it has the pale-green outside, instead of inside, and it sends forth branches, like those of the myrtle, suitable for crowns. From this Heracles took a shoot, and planted it at Olympia and from it are taken the crowns which are given to the combatants. This tree is near the river Ilissus, sixty stadia distant from the river. It is surrounded by a wall, and a severe penalty is imposed on any one who touches it. From this the Eleians took the shoot, and planted it in Olympia, and from it they took the crowns which they bestowed. [trans. Dowdall]

This story fits, in general outline, with the myth attested in Pindar's *Olympian* 3, that Heracles was the first to plant olive trees at Olympia. But the remarkable feature of this report, a bit of lore not found attested elsewhere, is that the famous Olympian olive was actually a transplanted shoot of an older tree that grew *in Athens*. In the Pindaric ode, Heracles travels to the land of the Hyperboreans to get saplings. As Pavlos Sfyroeras has pointed out, however, there are signs that Pindar in *Olympian* 3 appears to be manipulating traditions about the birthplace of the olive tree in an indirect challenge to Athenian claims about their polis having been the first place such trees grew, as gift of Athena.⁴¹ If this is right, then the erasure in non-Athenian literature might have extended to epichoric Athenian stories about which spot the Olympian Καλλιστέφανος supposedly originated from. The site of the “Pantheon” near the Ilissus is not discussed elsewhere, as far as I can find, in the ancient descriptions of Athens. (The building called “of all the gods” in Pausanias is a later Hadrianic construction, near his Library and the Agora.) The foundations of a few as yet unidentified temples have been found near the Ilissus, southeast of the Olumpieion. Further complication is introduced by the version of the story in pseudo-Aristotle that we find in the scholion to Aristophanes *Plutus* 586: in an otherwise very similar account, the tree is said to be near the Ilissus, yet some distance from a temple σταδίους ξ' τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἀπέχουσα. It is unclear whether the commentator had in mind a different temple, or placed the tree apart from the so-called Pantheon. Another scholiast, on Pindar *Olympian* 3, elucidates line 12 with a note that conflates the *alsos* at Olympia with an (otherwise unattested) Pantheon in Olympia itself: πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ τῆς Πίσσης ἄλσος διαλέγεται ἢ πρὸς τὸ Πάνθειον, ὅπου αἱ ἐλαῖαι φύονται.

Let me conclude this string of lore and extrapolations with the possibility that once upon a time Attic comedies did, in fact, end with καλλιστέφανος. If this was actually just the first word of a longer utterance, the whole might have run “Fair-crowned is Demeter” or even Athena, or Dionysus. But even the single word might have evoked deeper associations. Like καλλίνικε, it would make audiences think of victory—dramatic or komastic. In regard to the latter, it is not amiss to recall that the Anthesteria itself was held at the shrine of Dionysus “in the Marshes” (another site presumably near the marshy verge of the Ilissus, also unidentified at present). To have the chorus and actors shout καλλιστέφανος with a gesture toward the south-east of the Theater of Dionysus would once more merge pre-dramatic ritual

⁴¹ Sfyroeras 2003; see also Pavlou 2010.

for the wine-god with the highly evolved Dionysiac celebrations centered around tragedy, comedy, and the dithyramb. Finally, this *exodion*—comic or “komic” as it may have been—will have been a proud assertion that even Olympia, the ultimate site of victory in the Panhellenic world, owed its coveted crowns to an ancient sacred olive tree growing not far from an archetypal Athenian river.

SYNCHRONIC ASPECTS OF HOMERIC PERFORMANCE

THE EVIDENCE OF THE *HYMN TO APOLLO*¹

Here I will discuss neither the prehistory of Homeric epic, nor its transmission after these poems achieved a fixed form.² Instead, my focus will be on two moments of *synchronicity*, one modern and one archaic. Our own modern moment at the end of the millennium gives us a unique angle of vision from which to view the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. For the past few generations, the most important question in Homeric studies has been: are the poems better understood and interpreted as texts or as performances? Although there is not absolute consensus as we near the end of the century, most would agree that the insights of Milman Parry, Albert Lord, Gregory Nagy, and several other pioneering scholars into the nature of oral-traditional poetic performances must be central if we are to understand the art of Homeric composition.³

It may seem that our distance from the poems poses an insurmountable obstacle to imagining the circumstances and techniques of Homeric performance. How can we overcome centuries of diachronic change to re-constitute an archaic *synchronic* viewpoint on Homeric poetry? For if this art form is, indeed, one shaped by and continually renewed through performances,

¹ Originally published in *Una nueva visión de la cultura griega antigua hacia el fin del milenio*, ed. A. M. González de Tobia (La Plata, Argentina: Editorial de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2000), 403–32.

² For indications of the long prehistory of the compositions we call Homeric, see, e.g., Durante 1976; on the later transmission, Lamberton 1997.

³ For an evaluation of the claims that we can continue to read Homer without perspectives from oral poetics: Martin 1989. Recent formulations of the key insights about Greek poetry as performance: Lord 1995; Nagy 1996a; J. M. Foley 1995.

the synchronic axis should be our focus. As Gregory Nagy puts it in his recent book *Homeric Questions*, “Fieldwork in the study of oral poetry as it is performed requires a synchronic perspective, for purposes of describing the actual system perpetuated by the tradition.”⁴ How, then, can we perform Homeric “fieldwork”?

In *The Language of Heroes*, I attempted to explicate “Homer out of Homer” by analyzing the speeches of characters in the poem and applying the internal poetics that I discovered to the external composition itself, the *Iliad*. I now continue this sort of fieldwork by examining a composition that has been attributed to Homer since at least the time of Thucydides, the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. The analysis of the hymn that I am about to propose can enable us to understand more clearly not just the composition of this artful poem but at least one larger aspect of Homeric poetry as performance: how poems begin.

In 1782, David Ruhnken (1723–98) wrote in the second edition of his critical letter on the *Homeric Hymns* that the *Hymn to Apollo* as we now have it is the result of an editorial decision, the later connection of two hymns that were originally independent compositions.⁵ It is now known that Ruhnken, in fact, repeated, as his own words, almost the very words of a learned Frisian physician, Adrian Heringa, who in 1753 had communicated this idea to Ruhnken in a letter, now in the University Library at Leiden.⁶ The idea became known as Ruhnken’s, so I too shall refer to it that way, while acknowledging that some more complicated ventriloquism underlies this notation—not the last such miming to be found in connection with this hymn.⁷

Ruhnken’s reason for splitting the hymn in two was quite straightforward: he said that line 165 gives the usual epilogue and closing to a hymn (*solitum Hymni epilogum et finem*), while line 179 is the beginning of another hymn.⁸

⁴ Nagy 1996b, 17.

⁵ Ruhnken 1782, 7; A. Miller 1986, 111.

⁶ Van der Valk 1977, 441; Förstel 1979, 21–22.

⁷ Yet another fiction clings to the man: he gained some notoriety in England from the ditty penned by Richard Porson—“I went to Strasburg, where I got drunk / With that most learned Professor, Brunck; / I went to Wortz, where I got more drunken / With that more learned professor, Ruhnken”—but, in fact, Porson never left England: M. Clarke 1937, 16.

⁸ Cited in A. Miller 1986, 111.

ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ἰλήχοι μὲν Ἀπόλλων Ἀρτέμιδι ξύν	165
ὦ ἄνα, καὶ Λυκίην καὶ Μηονίην ἐρατεινήν	179

His supporting arguments were circumstantial: first, the testimony of Thucydides (*History of the Peloponnesian War* 3.104), who quotes the *Hymn to Apollo*, calling it a prooimion. Ruhnken claimed that Thucydides' introduction to his (variant) version of lines 165–72 (τὸν γὰρ Δηλιακὸν χορὸν τῶν γυναικῶν ὑμνήσας ἐτελεύτα τοῦ ἐπαίνου ἐς τὰδε τὰ ἔπη) meant not that Homer “was ending his praise of the Delian women” but “he was ending the *Hymn to Apollo*.” As corroboration, Ruhnken offered the words of Aelius Aristides concerning Homer's apparent self-description in the poem (*Orations* 34.35 = Dindorf 2.559):

διαλεγόμενος γὰρ ταῖς Δηλιάσι καὶ καταλύων τὸ προοίμιον, εἴ τις ἔροιθ' ὑμᾶς, φησὶν “Ὡ κοῦραι, τίς δ' ὕμνιν ἀνῆρ ἥδιστος αἰδῶν ...”

He interprets this also as a reference to a conclusion; thus, for Ruhnken, two ancient authorities attested to a hymn to Apollo ending about one-quarter of the way through the composition that we now possess in medieval manuscripts.⁹

Ruhnken's “discovery” anticipated by thirteen years the *Prolegomena to Homer* by Friedrich Wolf, the book that began the passion for dissecting Homeric epic.¹⁰ The same Analytic tendencies proceeded to beset the *Hymn to Apollo*.¹¹ By 1840 Lehrs was seeing no fewer than six hymns underlying the poem. By 1908, Ludwig in his *Homerischer Hymnenbau* had divined the structure of the whole composition as consisting of seventy-eight heptads—Apollo's sacred number—duly represented with proper spacing in his edition. In this critical atmosphere, Wilamowitz in 1916 sounded like the voice of cool reason, when he reaffirmed that the hymn comprised two parts and argued that the second, the so-called “Pythian” hymn, was a continuation modeled on the Delian hymn.¹² An Analyst view of the poem as comprising two parts was effectively canonized by his authority and thus survives two

⁹ It is worth stressing that the alleged break has no manuscript authority: Thalmann 1984, 65. On Thucydides' citation as a traditional formulaic variant, see Janko 1982, 2–3.

¹⁰ See the translation and essay on historical context: Wolf [1795] 1985. The book was dedicated to Ruhnken, whom Wolf praised (chap. 31) for his opinions on the recently discovered *Hymn to Demeter*. In Wolf's own account of the book's genesis, however, Ruhnken's work does not figure: Wolf [1795] 1985, 232–35.

¹¹ Förstel 1979 recounts the numerous Analytic proposals.

¹² Wilamowitz 1920, 440–62.

centuries after Ruhnken in Janko's 1982 book on epic diction.¹³ Long after most people have given up "analyzing" the Homeric epics into constituent parts and critics have begun treating them as artistic unities, this way of splitting up the *Hymn to Apollo* still persists.¹⁴ The question is whether the persistence stems from neglect, or from sensitivity.

For one familiar with oral poetics, Analyst argumentation can be seen to depend on a hermeneutic model of texts, copies, and editions that simply is anachronistic in the society of archaic Greece.¹⁵ This is why the explication by Andrew Miller in his monograph on the hymn is considerably more appealing. Among others, Kakridis, Dornseiff, and Floratos preceded Miller in Unitarian interpretation of this hymn as one composition.¹⁶ But Miller succeeds in particular because he wisely draws on the treasure-house of Pindaric hymnic rhetoric as a resource, thereby discovering a close relationship among the poem's parts.¹⁷ Building on his work, Jenny Strauss Clay's scene-by-scene Unitarian interpretation has the added advantage of incorporating the thematic thrust of the poem, as a whole, into the larger realm of theogonic myth-making, which she sees as the central role of the major hymns.¹⁸ Clay believes that a single poet aimed in the poem to press local Delian or Pythian traditions into the service of a more embracing Panhellenic ideology.¹⁹ Again, the Unitarian picture is inherently more appealing in its respect for social context and poetic nuance. Furthermore, methodologically, the Unitarians are on safer ground: after all, varied content hardly need betoken a difference in authorship.²⁰ Moreover, Ruhnken's circumstantial evidence tottered as critics pointed out that both Thucydides and Aristides more likely meant that the poet at line 165 ended his direct praise of the Delian girls, not the hymn.²¹

¹³ Janko 1982, 27–29, 99–119.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Kirk 1985a, 113–14 in what some regard as the current standard literary history.

¹⁵ See Nagy 1989 on the social staging for early Greek poetics; G. P. Edwards 1971, 33–39, 167–89 offers a closely reasoned critique of older "model/copy" argumentation.

¹⁶ Kakridis 1937; Dornseiff 1935; Floratos 1952; cf. Baltes 1982.

¹⁷ A. Miller 1986, 1–9.

¹⁸ Clay 1989, 17–94.

¹⁹ A similar observation had been made already by Nagy 1999b [1979], 6–7.

²⁰ For a history of Unitarian readings: Förstel 1979, 43–50, Drerup 1937.

²¹ See Drerup 1937, 101. Aloni 1980 shows that the wording of Aelius Aristides does not imply that the hymns ends here; Heubeck 1966, 229–30 demonstrates that Thucydides does not use *epainos* as a synonym for *hymnos*. Moreover, he shows in a later article (Heubeck 1972, 138–40) that lines

In addition to the growth of a sceptical outlook towards such things as ambiguous external evidence, another change has tilted the balance in favor of the Unitarian reading. The appreciation of oral-formulaic style that began with Milman Parry's work has made it hard to argue for separate poems on the basis of diction. Since Parry, scholars have had the means to realize that repetition or redeployment of a word or phrase can never by themselves be evidence for such phenomena as interpolation; cannot be used to claim priority for one or the other line; and are not a reliable guide to detecting the tracks of different composers.²² Kirk attempted the lattermost project, through a good deal of impressionistic reading but the most that such diction-based analyses can accomplish is to show that both parts of the *Hymn to Apollo* use the phrasing of epic, more or less successfully.²³ Neither Hoekstra nor Cantilena, in analyses much more thorough-going than Kirk's, finds significant difference between the Delian and Pythian segments, from the point of view of formulaic diction.²⁴

Despite these negative findings, it appears that the case for dividing the hymn *can* still seek support from linguistic stylistics. Janko, looking at such things as employment of movable-*nu*, finds that the Delian hymn (which he believes *was* a separate hymn) employs movable-*nu* before a consonant to make a long syllable in the verse about four times as often as the Pythian hymn, and sees in this a confirmation of the Delian part's East Greek origin.²⁵ A related phenomenon, metrical observance of digamma, similarly

179–81 are an artful transformation of the usual ending formulae, but do not signal a finale. Much of the argument could have been avoided if earlier critics had possessed the “new” Simonides poem on the battle of Plataea, *POxy.* 3965, fr. 1 + 2 ed. Parsons, which begins with a hymn to Achilles, followed by a break-off formula and then a new narrative, yet is obviously conceived as one composition; cf. West 1993, 4. Note especially the similar structure of the respective transitions: line 15 of the Simonides poem bids farewell to Achilles (*khaire*), and line 16 highlights the poet's shifting attention—*autar egô*; cf. *Hymn to Apollo* 166 *khairete* and 177 *autar egôn*.

²² See the detailed critique in G. P. Edwards 1971, 33–39, 167–89.

²³ See Kirk 1981; also his later remarks (1985a, 114) on the “relaxed and ample expression” of the Delian portion vs. the alleged “crabbed and prosaic” style of the Pythian. Frolíková 1963 notes minor differences in the use of epithets for Apollo, but fails to take account of formulaic flexibility and ends up conceding that both portions have non-Homeric as well as Homeric traits in diction. De Hoz 1964 more reasonably finds that the hymns represent a dictional tradition independent of epic.

²⁴ Hoekstra 1969, 25–34; Cantilena 1982. Notopoulos 1962, 358 using a definition that includes formula-like phrasing finds the Delian part 87% formulaic, the Pythian 94%.

²⁵ Janko 1982, 65–66; on some problems in Janko's approach: Thalmann 1984, 205 n. 88.

distinguishes the hymn's sections, with the "Delian" markedly less observant than the "Pythian."²⁶

The point to which the studies of the last two hundred or so years have brought us has been recently best formulated by Susan Shelmerdine, who characterizes the *Hymn to Apollo* as "an intentional blend of two separate traditions which has kept the language of each (Delian and Pythian) distinct in many places, yet consciously structured the narrative to connect the most important themes and events of the two."²⁷ She does not ask what circumstances would have produced precisely this compositional intention. In what follows, I would like to propose an answer to this question.

Two features of this hymn have not been fully appreciated. I stress that the features are not at the level of diction, which, being tied to content, must inevitably be different whenever different topics—the birth of Apollo, or his travels, or the foundation of Delphi—are sung about. Instead of relying on diction, I will focus first on the structure of the hymn, then on metrics, next will review the limited information about the origin of this hymn (or hymns), and, finally, will suggest how my analysis can clarify the vexed beginning of this hymn, as well as the function of the proems to the surviving Homeric epics.

My point on structure involves the poetic status of parallelism. Connoisseurs of Near Eastern, especially Biblical, poetry, would never denigrate the role of parallelism as a constitutive device.²⁸ Much of the intellectual history of Classics, however, was until recently marked by efforts to distinguish Greek culture and poetry from its eastern predecessors; parallelism, viewed as un-classical, was in studies of the *Hymn to Apollo* a target of the Analysts. The point is crystallized in the running debate between Dornseiff and Jacoby early in this century: wherever Dornseiff, the Unitarian, wanted to see an expansion, by the same poet, of an earlier motif—for instance, the expansion in lines 207–99 of the opening travel motif of the hymn—Jacoby, the Analyst, claims to find a sorry imitation by some later poet—in this case,

²⁶ West 1975, 161 calculated the rate of observance to neglect of initial digamma as Delian 1.6/1 vs. Pythian 3.6/1.

²⁷ S. Shelmerdine 1995, 59.

²⁸ On the pervasive parallel structures in Hebrew poetry: Watson 1994.

Hector) all show this consistent use by a second speaker of the first speaker's phrases and topics, but with the added feature—that the person who speaks second outdoes the first. Sheer size is a criterion. Furthermore, the paired speeches are carefully matched in structure.³³ I have argued that this aesthetic is at work in the composition of the *Iliad* itself, a poem that outdoes competing epics such as the Heracles poems through its sheer mass. If we apply this aesthetic to the parallel and expanded structure of the *Hymn to Apollo*, what is the result? The Pythian part of the hymn should be seen as competing with, and besting, the Delian.³⁴

Whatever their earliest origins, the *Homeric Hymns* as we have them fulfill more than a religious function: they were apparently preludes to epic performance and—most significant here—can *themselves be used in performance* contests.³⁵ The ending of *Hymn 6* in our collection asks the addressee, Aphrodite, specifically for “victory in *this agôn*” (lines 19–20):

δὸς δ' ἐν ἀγῶνι
νίκην τῷδε φέρεσθαι, ἐμὴν δ' ἔντυνον αἰοδῆν.

Grant me to win victory in this contest and fit out my song.

Of course, in hymn-contests, the context for the request does not have to be made explicit, any more than it does in the speeches of the *Iliad*, as the immediate context of the performance makes clear to a listening audience what the event and reward were to be.³⁶

Given this agonistic function of hymns, I now propose that our *Hymn to Apollo* comprises an unusual combination intentionally paired by one composer or performance tradition to represent, or re-enact, a contest of two poets, one trying to beat the other, with a hymn, in an *agôn*. I shall go further and identify the two poets: the “Delian” is Homer and the “Pythian”

³³ Lohmann 1970, 30–40, 96–112.

³⁴ Already Baumeister 1860, 116 imagined this situation but in a diachronic sense, when he noted that the Pythian section seemed intended to overcome the fame of the pre-existing Delian; as will become clear, I imagine instead a *synchronic* symbiotic relationship between the hymns, although of course their traditional *material*—themes and phrases—existed before the composition-in-performance of the *Hymn*.

³⁵ Other evidence for hymn-contests: Archilochus' victory with a Demeter hymn in a Parian contest, mentioned by the scholiast to Aristophanes *Birds* 1764 (Rutherford 1896, 591); Pausanias *Description of Greece* 10.7.2 on the ancient Delphic hymn contest, from which Hesiod was excluded; Hesiod *Works and Days* 650–54 on his victory at Khalkis.

³⁶ For agonistic impulses as a primary shaping factor in Greek poetry generally: Griffith 1990.

is Hesiod.³⁷ In the creative rhapsodic tradition that surely shapes all surviving archaic hexameter, it makes little sense to assert that a Homer or Hesiod “actually” composed any given verses; instead, what is important is that certain compositions are attributed to these poets by audiences and performers.³⁸ It will suffice to call the *Hymn* singers “Homer” and “Hesiod.” All that is missing to make the *Hymn to Apollo*’s setting an explicit contest is a single poetic line—and I must point out that several such single lines are indeed missing from our manuscript tradition.³⁹ The line would have read (in the vicinity of *Hymn to Apollo* 176): “Then Hesiod in turn began to sing.” Exactly such a narrative break in the representation of a poetic contest is, in fact, present in a comparable Greek hexameter poem, *Idyll* 6 of Theocritus (line 20):

Τῷ δ’ ἐπὶ Δαμοίτας ἀνεβάλλετο καὶ τὰδ’ ᾄειδεν.

The Hellenistic poets knew the hymn tradition well; the example of Callimachus stands out, but Aratus, Apollonius, and Theocritus clearly imitated them.⁴⁰ It may not be too drastic to assume that Theocritus knew a hexameter poetic contest using hymnic material (either in texts or in his own experience); at any rate, it is interesting that Damoetas, the herdsman in *Idyll* 6, performs by assuming a *persona*, that of the Homeric Cyclops. In the *Hymn to Apollo*, the passage concerning the marvelous Delian maidens (156–72) contains two instances of *personae*: the poet, addressing them, names himself as the “blind man of Chios,” while the maidens themselves are said to know how to imitate the voice and movement (*krembaliastus*) of every kind of person.⁴¹ At the very least, we can say that the singer of the Delian portion assumes the mask of Homer.⁴²

³⁷ I find after writing this paper that Pfister 1928, 9 made in passing the suggestion that ancient lore had linked the two parts of the *Hymn* with the contest mentioned in Hesiod fr. 265 Rzach = 357 MW, on which see below. He offers no further arguments for this.

³⁸ On the role of rhapsodes in the evolution of our Homeric text: Nagy 1996b, 84–86, 110–11; González 2013 *passim*.

³⁹ In the text of Allen-Sikes-Halliday (1936), there are lacunae after *Hymn to Apollo* 81, 317, and 539.

⁴⁰ R. L. Hunter 1996, 46–52 sees this familiarity partly as a reflex of the unbroken chain of rhapsodic transmission into the third century BCE.

⁴¹ For *krembaliastus* as specifically *dance* movement, see the analysis by Peponi 2009 of visual evidence featuring women who play on percussive *krotala*.

⁴² Of course, if it really was Homer who thus “signed” his work, rather than a rhapsode giving a stylized representation of the master singer, it is *less* likely that the details of lines 172–78 would

Having made this proposal—that *our Hymn to Apollo* is the representation of a poetic contest between Homer and Hesiod—I must turn towards two tasks: showing how some of the pieces of this puzzle had been put together before me; and showing how the new data that I have collected make this all the more likely a conclusion.

Baumeister's edition of 1860 first raised the notion, soon forgotten, that the Delian hymn was composed by one of the Homêridai and the Pythian by a follower of Hesiod.⁴³ He suggested this on internal evidence (knowledge of topography and local traditions of Boeotia; non-Homeric phrasing), as well as external evidence, primarily the key testimony of the scholion to Pindar *Nemean* 2.1, which mentions rhapsodizing of Homeric and Hesiodic compositions. In addition, the scholia to *Iliad* 2.523 refer to what we now read as *Hymn to Apollo* 241 as coming from Hesiod (fr. 70.18 MW, from the *Catalogue of Women*). Another piece of external evidence was drawn into discussion by Otto Crusius a century ago: the lines from the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* (the *Certamen*) that tell how Homer sang a hymn to Apollo at the horn altar in Delos, a hymn that was thereupon written on a tablet and dedicated in the temple of Artemis; the first line, the only one given, matches that of the existing *Hymn* (*Certamen* lines 315–20 Allen)—evidence that, at least this part, was attributed to Homer.⁴⁴

As we have it, the *Certamen* dates to Hadrian's era. But papyrus finds early in this century have made it clear that the fourth-century sophist Alcidas, pupil of Gorgias, is responsible for most of the surviving version, as the young Friedrich Nietzsche had divined.⁴⁵ The *Certamen* gives us interesting glimpses of forms of poetic dueling—for example, the exchange of “amphibolic gnomes” in which Hesiod gives a line that seems to offer an impossible conclusion, to which Homer must reply with a verse that gives good sense and syntax, while avoiding the absurdity towards which Hesiod had been steering him. For instance, when Hesiod says, “they took dinner then, the meat of cows and the necks of horses ...,” Homer jumps in to give the second accusative a different governing verb, enjambed in the completion-verse:

be included. He doth protest too much. It is significant that late features of language and diction cluster in this very passage: Gladstone 1876, 116 speaks of “such a crowded appropriation of marked Homeric phrase as could not have been due to Homer” here; cf. Hoekstra 1969, 25.

⁴³ Baumeister 1860, 115 *a poeta ... e disciplina Hesiodi*.

⁴⁴ Crusius 1895, 718; *Certamen* text from Allen 1912:237.

⁴⁵ Nietzsche 1870–73; for full details and bibliography, including views that the work contains archaic material, see now O'Sullivan 1992, 63–105.

“... they unhitched, sweating when they had their fill of war.”⁴⁶ This section of the *Certamen*, in particular, displays what must have been the skills of some hexameter performers at intricate variation. Comparative evidence from modern Turkey shows that such complex variation need *not* be text-based (i.e., in the *Certamen* need not be an invention of Alcidamas), but flourishes specifically in actual minstrel contests.⁴⁷ In this connection, it is interesting that at least two lines from the “Pythian” hymnic section have been identified as having a similar “amphibolic” structure.⁴⁸

After a seemingly arbitrary royal decision to award Hesiod the victory (because he sang of peace), Hesiod dedicates his tripod to the Muses, inscribing on it “that he defeated divine Homer by a hymn at Khalkis” (*Certamen* 210–16). He then proceeds to Delphi, where the Pythia warns him about his death. The *Certamen* places the poetic contest in Euboea, at Khalkis. This is apparently an old tradition, though in the actual Hesiodic lines that seem to refer to the same event the poet does not say whom he defeated, only that it was by a *hymnos* (*Works and Days* 656–58):

ἔνθα μέ φημι
 ὕμνῳ νικήσαντα φέρειν τρίποδ' ὠτώεντα.
 τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ Μοῦσῃσ' Ἑλικωνιάδεσσ' ἀνέθηκα

The *Certamen* lines may seem odd, because nothing in the narrated contest between the two poets resembles a “hymn” in the narrower sense; the word seems to be used in this event as synonymous with *epic verse*.⁴⁹ Shortly after this point, the *Certamen* features the *hymn* performance, but by Homer, and *not* (at least overtly) in a contest. After defeat by Hesiod and a period of wandering about performing epics and composing epigrams, he comes at last to Delos, where he performs the Apollo hymn. Thus the *Certamen* seems to imagine a complementary distribution: *Hesiod* wins a contest, but not with a hymn in the narrow sense; *Homer* is rewarded for a hymn in the narrow sense, but not because he sang it in a contest.

⁴⁶ *Certamen* 102–37. Kakridis 1980, 133–34 cites a modern Greek folk example of amphibolic gnome. For the technique, see in detail Collins 2004.

⁴⁷ Erdener 1993 attests to similar, and even more complex, poetic entrapments in contemporary Turkish song contests.

⁴⁸ Kirk 1981, 174, who identified this, finds it “non-traditional,” by which he means non-*Homeric*.

⁴⁹ On the semantics of *hymnos* “song,” see Nagy 1990, 353–57.

Both Crusius in 1895 and Janko in 1982 (apparently unaware of the earlier work) adduce another testimonium, the fragment attributed to Hesiod (357 MW):⁵⁰

ἐν Δήλῳ τότε πρῶτον ἐγὼ καὶ Ὅμηρος αἰοῖδοι
μέλομεν, ἐν νεαροῖς ὕμνοις ῥάψαντες αἰοιδήν,
Φοῖβον Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσάορον, ὃν τέκε Λητώ.

We can notice that this passage, from the scholia to *Nemean* 2.1 concerning rhapsodes, fills a gap in the story: the speaker “Hesiod” says that he and Homer first sang at Delos. He does *not* say that this was a contest, but he uses the phrase ἐν νεαροῖς ὕμνοις ῥάψαντες αἰοιδήν, “in new *hymnoi* stitching a song.” This description could fit a kind of cooperative enterprise in which the two poets “stitch together” their songs synchronically. The fragment clearly represents two poets working at the same time, not just two pre-fabricated poems sung anonymously. Nagy has recently explicated the metaphor underlying *rhapsôidia* as follows: “Many various fabrics of song, each one already made ... become remade into a unity, a single, new continuous fabric, by being sewn together.”⁵¹ While he does not refer to the *Hymn to Apollo*, I must point out that Nagy’s description fits exactly the situation that I envision as being represented both by the poem and by this Hesiodic fragment that refers to the cooperative composition of the two great hexameter poets. One may question how jointly “stitching” a song, as in fragment 357 MW, can be reconciled with competitive singing, and I will return to this problem in my conclusion. But at this juncture, we must turn to the new evidence regarding the second feature of the *Hymn*, its metrics, in order to see that two poetic *personae* are, in fact, aurally distinguished in the *Hymn to Apollo*.

As the following analysis of lines 176–203 shows, there is an unusual stylistic feature that occurs in a marked way soon after Ruhnken’s alleged break between the two portions of the hymn:

οἱ δ’ ἐπὶ δὴ πείσονται, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐτήτυμόν ἐστιν.
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν οὐ λήξω ἐκηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα
ὑμνέων ἀργυρότοξον ὃν ἠΰκομος τέκε Λητώ.
ὦ ἄνα, καὶ Λυκίην καὶ Μηονίην ἐρατεινὴν
καὶ Μίλητον ἔχεις ἔναλον πόλιν ἰμερόεσσαν,

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⁵⁰ Crusius 1895, 718; Janko 1982, 113 is led by this to observe “at some period hymns called ‘Homeric’ and ‘Hesiodic’ were recited together on Delos in Apollo’s honor,” but does not see in this a direct allusion to our *Hymn*.

⁵¹ Nagy 1996b, 86.

αὐτὸς δ' αὖ Δήλοιο περικλύστων μέγ' ἀνάσσεις. εἷσι δὲ φορμίζων Λητοῦς ἐρικυδέος υἱὸς φόρμιγγι γλαφυρῇ πρὸς Πυθῷ πετρῆεσσαν, ἄμβροτα εἴματ' ἔχων τεθυωμένα τοῖο δὲ φόρμιγγ χρυσέου ὑπὸ πλήκτρου καναχὴν ἔχει ἱμερόεσσαν	185
ἐνθεν δὲ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονὸς ὥς τε νόημα εἷσι Διὸς πρὸς δῶμα θεῶν μεθ' <u>ὁμήγουριν ἄλλων</u> αὐτίκα δ' ἀθανάτοισι μέλει κίθαρις καὶ ἀοιδή. Μοῦσαι μὲν θ' ἅμα πᾶσαι ἀμειβόμεναι ὅπῃ καλῇ ὑμνεῦσιν ῥά θεῶν δῶρ' ἄμβροτα ἡδ' ἀνθρώπων	190
τλημοσύνας, ὅσ' ἔχοντες ὑπ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι ζώουσ' ἀφραδέες καὶ ἀμήχανοι, οὐδὲ δύνανται εὐρέμεναι θανάτοιο τ' ἄκος καὶ γήραος ἄλκαρ αὐτὰρ εὐπλόκαμοι Χάριτες καὶ εὐφρονες Ὠραι Ἀρμονίη θ' Ἥβη τε Διὸς θυγάτηρ τ' Ἀφροδίτη	195
ὀρχεῦντ' ἀλλήλων ἐπὶ καρπῷ χειρὰς ἔχουσαι τῆσι μὲν οὐτ' αἰσχροὴ μεταμέλεται οὐτ' ἐλάχεια, ἀλλὰ μάλα μεγάλη τε ἰδεῖν καὶ εἶδος ἀγητὴ Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα ὁμότροφος Ἀπόλλωνι. ἐν δ' αὖ τῆσιν Ἀρης καὶ εὐσκοπος Ἀργειφόντης	200
παίζουσ' αὐτὰρ ὁ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων ἐγκιθαρίζει καλὰ καὶ ὕψι βιβάς, αἴγλη δέ μιν ἀμφιφαίνει μαρμαρυγαί τε ποδῶν καὶ ἐυκλώστοιο χιτῶνος.	

At issue is the metrical feature known as Hermann's Bridge, the noted avoidance of word-break after the trochee of the fourth foot in the hexameter. In Homeric verse, this rule is violated very rarely: counts range from 1 per 200 verses to 1 per 1000.⁵² But in the *Hymn to Apollo* (546 lines), word break after the fourth trochee occurs nine times (or 1 per 60 verses). Three occurrences, the most densely clustered, are underlined in the above passage. The others are:

Ἴμβρος τ' εὐκτιμένη καὶ Λῆμνος <u>ἀμιχθαλόεσσα</u>	36
ἄψ περιτελλομένου ἔτεος <u>καὶ ἐπήλυθον ὦραι</u>	350
καὶ Θρύνω Ἀλφειοῖο πόρον <u>καὶ εὐκτιτον Αἶπυ</u>	423
καὶ σπεῖσαι μακάρεσσι θεοῖς οἱ <u>Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν</u>	498 = 512
ῥήϊδιον ἔπος ὕμμ' ἐρέω <u>καὶ ἐπὶ φρεσὶ θήσω</u>	534

⁵² On the lack of agreement over violations, see Appendix below.

Clearly, eight of these nine breaks occur after line 165, the spot that marks the division of hymns according to Ruhnken.⁵³ In addition, the violations that occur in the second part of the hymn are part of a larger stylistic feature, noted by underlinings above: five of the eight “Pythian” cases of violation occur when the word *kai* is correpted next to a word beginning with *e-* (3x) or *eü-* (2x). Correption, of course, is widespread in all hexameter verse; in this position (*kai* before the second short of the fourth foot), it is less common, but still can be found, 68 times in the *Odyssey* (an average of 1 per 178 verses), for example.⁵⁴ Only once in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined, however, does the constellation of correpted *kai* plus disyllabic *eü-* occur in the fourth foot, at *Iliad* 2.592 (= *Hymn to Apollo* 423):

Οἷ δὲ Πύλον τ' ἐνέμοντο καὶ Ἀρήνην ἐρατεινὴν
καὶ Θρύον Ἀλφειοῖο πόρον καὶ εὐκτιτον Αἰπὺ
καὶ Κυπαρισσήεντα καὶ Ἀμφιγένειαν ἔναιον
καὶ Πτελεὸν καὶ Ἴελος καὶ Δώριον, ἔνθά τε Μοῦσαι
ἀντόμεναι Θάμυριν τὸν Θρήϊκα παῦσαν ἀοιδῆς
Οἰχαλίηθεν ἰόντα παρ' Εὐρύτου Οἰχαλιῆος 595

The line comes in the sentence describing Thamyras' *poetic contest* with the Muses as he returned from Oichalia—an interesting contextual analogue to the possible *agôn* represented by the *Hymn*.⁵⁵ It may be that the same rhapsodes interested in stylizing a hymn-competition between Homer and Hesiod also had a hand in composing this *Iliad* scene.

For the deeper significance of the specific stylistic feature illustrated in the “Pythian” portion, whereby fourth-foot trochee breaks coincide with correpted *kai*, I draw attention to the following lines from Hesiod's *Theogony*:⁵⁶

⁵³ If one takes line 179 as the start of the “Pythian” hymn, then two violations occur before the break. The division that best fits my reading of the poem occurs after 176. It should be pointed out that purely numerical averages do not capture the actual *density* of violations, that is, the number of lines *between* violations. In a random sample of 546 Homeric lines *Odyssey* 5.1–493 plus 6.1–53, I find the following intervals between “violations” in the broadest sense—see Appendix: 5.225, 5.476, 6.9, 6.10. My impression from reading similar stretches of text is that the longer intervals of approximately 200 lines are most common.

⁵⁴ My calculation was done using a concordance to van Thiel's *Odyssey* text, Tebben 1994. I have not been able to analyze the *Iliad* in this way.

⁵⁵ On the assertion, embedded in this passage, of Homeric authority vs. other poetic traditions, see Martin 1989, 229.

⁵⁶ See also fragments 33.18 and 123.2 MW.

74 ἀθανάτοις διέταξε νόμους καὶ ἐπέφραδε τιμάς.
 122 δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.
 237 αὐτίς δ' αὖ Θαύμαντα μέγαν καὶ ἀγήνορα Φόρκυν
 896 ἶσον ἔχουσιν πατρὶ μένος καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν,

Works and Days

6 ῥεῖα δ' ἀρίζηλον μινύθει καὶ ἄδηλον ἀέξει,
 7 ῥεῖα δέ τ' ἰθύνει σκολιὸν καὶ ἀγήνορα ἀρῶφι
 25 καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει καὶ αἰοιδὸς αἰοιδῷ.
 44 ὥστε σε κείς ἐνιαυτὸν ἔχειν καὶ ἀεργὸν ἐόντα
 67 ἐν δὲ θέμεν κύνεον τε νόον καὶ ἐπίκλοπον ἦθος
 78 ψεύδεά θ' αἰμυλίους τε λόγους καὶ ἐπίκλοπον ἦθος
 183 οὐδὲ ξεινὸς ξεινοδόκῳ καὶ ἐταῖρος ἐταίρῳ
 208 τῇ δ' εἷς ἥ σ' ἄν ἐγὼ περ ἄγω καὶ αἰοιδὸν εὐοῖσαν
 493 Πὰρ δ' ἴθι χάλκειον θῶκον καὶ ἐπαλέα λέσχην
 574 φεύγειν δὲ σκιερὸς θώκος καὶ ἐπ' ἥρα κοῖτον
 602 θῆτά τ' ἄοικον ποιεῖσθαι καὶ ἄτεκνον ἔριθον
 674 μηδὲ μένειν οἶνόν τε νέον καὶ ὀπωρινὸν ὄμβρον

It is safe to say that this is a noticeable feature of Hesiodic verse. Most striking is the *Works and Days*, with a ratio of 1 occurrence per 69 lines—nearly three times the *Odyssey* average—and especially the high density in the first 200 lines. Let me stress: I am not arguing that Hesiod composed the Pythian part of the *Hymn to Apollo*. In fact, it is odd that this “Hesiodic” feature is so prominent right after the break. This fact leads me to suggest that we have here an *impersonation of Hesiod*, which seeks, as do modern impersonators, to establish the personality being mimicked through an immediate heavy emphasis on the most characteristic traits of its target.⁵⁷

Now we can return to the speaker who was identified in antiquity as “Hesiod” in fragment 357 MW. Notice in these lines exactly the same rare word-break conjoined with the same sort of correption of *kai*:

ἐν Δήλῳ τότε πρῶτον ἐγὼ καὶ Ὀμηρος αἰοιδοί

This stylistic fingerprint suggests that either there existed a Hesiodic hexameter version of the *Certamen* at an early period—or more likely, that whoever composed the *Hymn to Apollo* as we have it made these lines as part of its framing narrative, to introduce the great imaginary contention of the bards.

⁵⁷ Also in favor of the “Hesiodic” sound of the Pythian portion are the greater proportion of observed digamma and a contrastive lack of Hesiodic features in the Delian portion compared with the other hymns in the collection, which would make the first section sound more “Homeric”: Janko 1982, 106.

My conclusion does not necessarily contradict the scenarios produced by several scholars who have attempted to situate the *Hymn*'s composition in historical terms. The invaluable scholion to *Nemean* 2.1 (3.29.9–18 Drachmann) asserts that the *Hymn* was written by one Cynaethus of Chios “who first rhapsodized Homer’s epics in Syracuse” and attributed by him (*anatetheiken*) to Homer.⁵⁸ Taking this cue, Burkert and Janko independently suggested that the performance occasion for the *Hymn* was the unique Delian-Pythian festival staged by Polycrates on Delos, most likely in 522 BCE.⁵⁹ Neither imagines a contest, but rather a performance of hymns that had been spliced for the occasion. We do not, however, require a datable contest-situation; on my reading, the *representation* of a contest would still explain better the preserved stylistic differences. After all, if we assume as these scholars do that one rhapsode composed in or for performance a hymn meant to be his own, or in his own voice, even with materials drawn from distinct traditions, the metrical and linguistic differences noted above should *not* occur: his own style should permeate the composition. On the other hand, we know from Plato’s *Ion* (531a2) that some rhapsodes did perform the verses of *both* masters (and Archilochus as well): thus it would not be impossible for one performer to “do all the voices.”⁶⁰

So much for my argument that a specific performance context is being represented by the *Hymn to Apollo*, a context that can explain the seeming stylistic anomalies between the two portions, through reference to characterization by style. In this light, the citation by Thucydides (*History of the Peloponnesian War* 3.104) of the lines from this hymn, the passage that first led Ruhnken to his radical proposal, should be given one more look. Only Heubeck seems to have appreciated the great care with which the ancient historian supported his argument that there had been musical and gymnastic contests on Delos before the Athenians revived them after the “katharsis” of

⁵⁸ Note that the verb is also *vox propria* for dedication; for application to a hymn, cf. the event discussed above, *Certamen* 320–21 Allen: the Delians wrote Homer’s lines on a tablet and dedicated it (*anethēkan*) in the shrine of Artemis. To my knowledge, this sentence is universally interpreted in the way Burkert 1979, 54 reads it “and he wrote, among the works attributed to Homer, the hymn to Apollo and *fathered it on Homer*.” Yet I fail to see why we cannot take the syntax and semantics more simply to read “and dedicated it to *him* [*autōi* = Apollo].” I intend to examine the interpretation of the entire scholion more closely in a separate article.

⁵⁹ Burkert 1979, 59; Janko 1982, 113–14; Aloni 1989 expands and elaborates the argument drawing historical parallels with Peisistratid initiatives; cf. De Martino 1982, 52.

⁶⁰ This would give even further metadramatic point to the praise of the Deliades’ mimetic ability. It is interesting that of the three poets mentioned as *objects* of rhapsodic performance, Hesiod and Archilochus are also depicted in tradition as hymnic competitors, perhaps another indication that their biographies stem from rhapsodes, who retrojected onto them their own habits. On Homer as competitor, see below.

426/5 BCE. As Heubeck points out, lines 146–50, cited at 3.104.4, attest only to the existence of athletic and *choral* performances (ὄρχηστῦ καὶ ἀοιδῇ), while 165–72 (cited at 3.104.5) constitute for Thucydides the proof of the *mousikês agôn*.⁶¹ It is in these lines that “Homer” proposes the poetic contract with the Delian maidens.⁶² (In performance, these were either the “back-up singers” for a rhapsodic/citharodic performance or participated in a separate choral *agôn*.⁶³) Clearly, Thucydides read the poet’s riddling advice (that the girls should tell others they like the blind man’s songs best) as agonistic self-advertisement.

If, finally, we extend this analysis and imagine that our “Homeric” poems—epics and hymns—at some point in their long evolution were *composed* (rather than simply “recited”) in just such contest situations, what can we learn?⁶⁴

A number of things might be noted, but I shall focus on one. It is well known that the beginning of the *Hymn to Apollo* presents many problems, especially in the seemingly arbitrary variation of verb tenses. Is the description of Apollo’s entrance onto Olympus the narration of a one-time event in the past, at his coming of age, properly belonging later in the narrative? Or is it a description of an eternal present, in which Apollo is continually posing a threat to the Olympian order?⁶⁵ In any case, this is a powerful passage, a poetic tour de force as sudden as Apollo’s entrance.

If we imagine that the *Hymn* represents a poetic contest, it is not unlikely that the ambiguity in the opening lines captures a feature of actual performance practice by those who composed as they sang: namely, the urge to

⁶¹ Heubeck 1966, 227–28, who points out that Thucydides’ version of line 150 with *kathêsôsin* vs. the *Hymn to Apollo stêsôntai* refers to the act of gathering, not setting up a contest. He voices doubt as to whether lines 165ff. prove Thucydides’ point and wonders if he got the idea of a contest of singers from later rhapsodic practice. In my reading of the *Hymn*, the lines prove the point; Thucydides’ conception about Homer performing in an agonistic setting may reflect the ideology of rhapsodes whom he could interview, rather than his own retrojection.

⁶² For this scene as “contract,” see D. Miller 1986, 62, who, however, sees it as *not* “overtly agonistic.” I would claim it is.

⁶³ Aloni 1993 suggests that the *Hymn* was designed to *introduce* such a choral competition, rather than serve as a poem to an epic performance at Delos.

⁶⁴ No one doubts that rhapsodic contests figured in the *transmission* of these poems; in arguing for an effect on *composition*, I am aligning myself with Nagy’s perspective on the evolution of the Homeric text, as outlined most recently in Nagy 1996b, 29–112. I note especially his conclusion (p. 110) that it was Panathenaic rhapsode performance that led to the “achievement of a near-textual status of the Homeric poems.” I take this to mean that we should imagine a certain degree of flexibility and fine-tuning in the actual performances: they are much closer to “composition-in-performance.”

⁶⁵ On the problems of the opening, see West 1975, 163; Càssola 1975, 486; Janko 1982, 100; J. S. Clay 1989, 22–29.

seize on the most captivating and exciting episode first, before a competitor might get the chance to elaborate the episode in its correct chronological position in the tale. “Homer,” anticipating that his opponent would relish elaborating the splendid arrival of the god on Olympus, beat him to the punch, although he had not even told yet of the god’s birth, and tried to “universalize” the eventual epiphanic moment.

Such a (hypothetical) practice—preemptive poetic strikes—would provide a motivation for the rule, which we find attributed to Hipparchus the son of Peisistratus concerning Homeric rhapsodic competition at the Panathenaea, that each performer pick up the story where the previous one left off (*ex hypolêpseôs*).⁶⁶ We should distinguish effect from intent here. From the diachronic perspective, such a rule would eventually have the effect that long epic compositions would become crystallized and comprehensive. But from the *synchronic* perspective, on which I have dwelt, the rule would function differently: by forcing rhapsodes to perform in order, no one singer is given a competitive advantage over any other.⁶⁷ The superb management of athletic games to assure equity could easily have been extended by the promoters of the Panathenaic games in this way.⁶⁸ To put this another way, the contest that I find represented in the *Hymn to Apollo* gives us a glimpse of a “pre-Peisistratid” *agôn*. Perhaps we should call it a poem from the age of the “lamb-singers,” *arnôidoi*. The *Nemean* 2.1 scholion (on the authority of Dionysius of Argos) identifies these men as predecessors of the rhapsodes and contrasts them specifically by mentioning the former group’s propensity for singing whatever section of the poetic tradition each one chose to (*hekastos ho ti bouloito meros êide*).⁶⁹ Whether this is an authentic memory or an archaizing fiction, the scenario brings us finally to a fuller understanding of the importance *for competitors* that the proems of epic, too, be artful and arresting.⁷⁰ If our Homeric epics in their present form date from before the Peisistratid period in the later sixth century,

⁶⁶ On the sources for this rule, see Allen 1924, 227.

⁶⁷ Nagy 1996b, 75–84 identifies the intent of the rule as being to enforce the “even weighting” of episodes in epic; I am fully in agreement. As the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, however, represent the ultimate crystallization, the end-product of such weighting, we would be less likely to see signs of competitive pre-emptive poetic strikes within them.

⁶⁸ De Martino 1982, 36–41 in the course of a difficult argument that “Homer’s” self-praise eliminated him from contests metaphorically (i.e., severed the *Hymn* from the Homeric corpus) refers to the rule (cf. Herodotus *Histories* 8.59) that those who tried to get a head-start in athletic events were penalized. I suggest the rule would have applied to poetic contests as well.

⁶⁹ Nagy 1996b, 84 cites the passage in discussing the Panathenaic “rule.”

⁷⁰ It may explain why the proem of the *Odyssey*, e.g., poses so many problems for interpreters: see the careful reading by Pedrick 1992.

we might read at *Odyssey* 1.10 a relic of the period when poets could and did begin their composition where they wanted—stylized as the Muse’s choice: “tell us, also, about these things, daughter of Zeus, starting from whatever place [*hamothen*].” But perhaps, as in the heavily emphasized allusion to the Homeric persona in the *Hymn to Apollo*’s first portion, the command that the Muse begin the story “at any point” is also a convenient synchronic fiction. It is an even more effective and persuasive way to begin a composition when there is a rule in existence that one *cannot* just start anywhere in the story.

I conclude with some comparative evidence that clarifies the methods and implications of the sort of agonistic composition that I have proposed for the *Hymn to Apollo*. The folklorist Yildiray Erdener reports, after observing some 500 song duels in northeastern Turkey during 1982, that each singer (*ashik*) involved in these organized contests at coffee-houses has devised a number of strategies for embarrassing and defeating his opponents. In one technique, singers entrap their challengers by forcing them into absurd or obscene rhymes within the required rhyme-scheme. This may remind us of the amphibolic gnomes of the *Certamen*. Erdener does not record encountering agonistic production of long poems, such as I am proposing. But one detail of the sociology of Turkish song-contests remains suggestive: each *ashik* not only secretly observes his audience just prior to performance in order to prepare verses that will praise the specific group each night; he also *confers* at length, prior to the performance, with that night’s competitor. In other words, competition induces *collaboration*. It is in this light, ultimately, that fragment 357 MW makes most sense: “Homer” and “Hesiod” stitch together their song through collaborative competition of the type still attested in living oral traditions.⁷¹ In this light, as well, the praise of the Delians by the blind man of Chios is more than merely a compliment to the local chorus; it is part of a broader strategy to capture the good will of his voting audience by working it into his act: like every oral performer, he adjusts his composition to suit the immediate situation.⁷² Nationally-known

⁷¹ Such a context would explain the seamless matching that is articulated by Ballabriga 1990, 19: “Tout semble donc se passer comme si la première partie de l’hymne prévoyait la seconde.” “Homer” can in fact know fairly well ahead of performance what “Hesiod” will sing; in the event, “Hesiod” can of course re-adjust his verses to match the previous performer’s. W. Knight 1941, 312–13 came closest to this notion in his interpretation of fr. 357 MW as representing a joint Homeric/Hesiodic composition by a process of “epic combination.” He imagines, however, something like the “agglutinative” method envisioned by Notopoulos as resulting in this hymn (1962, 348); neither scholar is thinking of live contest performance as real or represented context for the *Hymn*.

⁷² Cf. De Martino 1982, 67 on “Homer’s” words at 165–73 as the equivalent of “un agonistico curriculum vitae.”

Turkish singers compete in annual festivals where the best performers gather and their prestige is placed on the line. It seems likely that our *Hymn to Apollo* re-enacts and reflects a long Greek tradition of similar contests.⁷³

Appendix: On Hermann's Bridge

I base part of the preceding argument on a stylistic feature involving the fourth-foot trochaic caesura. It would be easier to argue tangible stylistic variation between Homer and Hesiod if we had: 1) a precise definition of when Hermann's Bridge (hereafter HB) is violated; and 2) reliable statistics of the entire hexameter corpus, keyed precisely to this definition. These remain desiderata. A third (3) consideration is whether metrical variation at this level could have been perceived by an audience so as to produce characterization by style. In the interest of clearing the ground, I offer the following observations:

1. *Definitions.* Hermann (1805, 692–96) in first noting the rarity of word-break after the first short in the fourth foot (hereafter tr4) cited 18 examples (p. 692) without immediate further categorization, including such lines as *Iliad* 9.394, 21.483, 21.575 and *Odyssey* 5.400, 5.476, 7.192. He made no claim to have counted all the examples. At the same time, he proceeded to introduce several qualifications that would make the rare caesura more “tolerable”:
 - a. if a caesura occurs after the first syllable of the fifth foot as well (as in *Iliad* 6.2, 24.60; this eliminates *Odyssey* 7.192 from his preliminary list on p. 692, although Hermann at no point explicitly re-evaluates the list).
 - b. if the word after the caesura is *not* amphibrach (he cites *Iliad* 9.482 and 10.317, but in fact this constraint would seem to make tolerable almost all instances and also eliminates from his preliminary list on p. 692 all but *Iliad* 21.483, 21.575, *Odyssey* 5.400 = 6.294 = 12.181, 7.192 [but see rule “a” above], 8.554, 12.47, 18.150). In other

⁷³ Since the original publication of this article, the most probing further structural and thematic analysis has been by Heiden 2013, whose conclusion (p. 8) accords with the view offered here of the overall unity of the poem: “The meticulously comprehensive analogousness of ... specific, extensive, and arbitrary sequences of topics indicates intentional planning particular to the hymn.” I wish to offer my warmest thanks to Prof. Ana María González de Tobía for the invitation to present this material as a paper at the University of La Plata, Argentina during the excellent Coloquio that she organized. I owe special thanks to Prof. Dora Pozzi, who graciously and speedily translated my paper into Spanish for the event and chaired the session. For advice concerning its arguments I am indebted to many participants in the Coloquio, as also to audiences at Stanford, UCLA, Yale, and Princeton.

words, at this point only six different lines, from his original exempla, remain. However, since Hermann never constructs or enumerates an airtight category of “violations,” the paring down has no consequences.

- c. Most important for our purposes, he refuses to identify as any sort of violation lines such as *Iliad* 1.33, *Odyssey* 4.677, in which a monosyllable joined in sense to the next word *precedes* tr4: “Haec minime rara sunt exempla” (p. 693). This means that Hermann did not focus on the *kai* + *correction* lines that I identify in this paper as a “stylistic fingerprint.”

Hoekstra (1969, 62) seemingly generalizes this mitigating factor to include any monosyllable, but does not specify whether he is speaking of the word before or after the caesura. West (1982, 38 n18) offers the more efficient formulation: word-division after prepositive or before postpositive is disregarded for the purposes of identifying violations. (I thank Fred Naiden of Harvard for pointing out West’s version to me.)

Solomon (1985) taking what he calls the “softening” effects (p. 25) into account (*a* through *c*, in my list) adds to them several mitigating circumstances suggested after Hermann’s work (mainly by Monro and van Leeuwen):

- d. if the final word of the hexameter = 5 syllables (e.g., *Iliad* 10.317).
- e. if the “violation” follows an elision.

As he notes, by these criteria *Theogony* 319 is the only line in Hesiod to offer an unmitigated violation of HB. He does not subject Homer to such an examination.

2. *Statistics.* As with studies concerning the Homeric formulae, every scholar seems to have used his or her own implicit definition when counting “violations” of HB. As is already clear from #1 above, even the notion of violation expresses a rigidity that Hermann himself avoided in noting the phenomena surrounding tr4. Obviously, what one wants is a graded list telling, for each hexameter composition, how tr4 occurs, in terms of the categories *a* through *e* above (and any not so “mitigated”). Only then can we make accurate comparative statements. Note further that such an account would ideally examine textual traditions, formula usage, and higher narrative features in the vicinity of each “violation” (in sum, a potential dissertation). This much said, I present a range of statistics that have already been somehow compiled regarding HB and have a bearing on the *Hymn to Apollo*:

- The oft-cited figure that violations (undefined) of HB occur 1 per 1000 lines in Homer was put forward by Maas (1962, para. 87) without citation of source. West (1966, 94–95) criticized it as low, claiming instead that HB violations (constraints unstated) occur 1 per 550 lines

in Homer and 1 per 370 lines in Hesiod. Solomon (1985, 22–23) in turn claims West used inaccurate information from van Leeuwen 1890, but does not say exactly where the inaccuracies lie and offers no new figures of his own.

- O'Neill (1942, 158), compiling figures on the basis of 1000-line segments (NB: *not* randomly selected, as they match book-divisions), found that tr4 marks 1.2% of *Iliad* lines, 0.9% *Odyssey*, 1.1% Hesiod. If these figures are compared with West's, above, and we assume no vast inaccuracies, then 1/6 to 1/5 of Homer's tr4 violate HB; 1/4 of Hesiod's do. Compare van Raalte (1986) who gives more comprehensive figures on tr4: *Iliad* 4.2%, *Odyssey* 3.3%, Hesiod 6%. Clearly either criteria or accuracy have shifted from the earlier analysis; in any event, seen proportionally, differences between Homeric and Hesiodic practice do not seem significant.
- Athanassakis (1970, 139) ignores constraint c and finds that HB violations occur in 5% of Hesiodic lines. This produces an absurd result if O'Neill's figure concerning tr4 is accurate (it may be that he ignored enclitics in counting tr4): there would be four times more HB violations than there are tr4. Athanassakis contrasts a figure he finds in Sturtevant alleging that 2.2% of the first 500 lines of the *Iliad* violate HB. Of course, we do not know the latter scholar's definition of HB.
- Sicking (1993, 78) says 0.47% of the *Iliad* lines violate HB. No source or definition given.

In sum, depending on often unstated criteria for counting and defining HB, violations range from a low 0.1% (Maas), through 0.18% (West) and 0.47% (Sicking) to Sturtevant's 2.2%. It would be fruitless to compare any figures I have found regarding Hesiod and the *Hymn*, given the lack of clear-cut criteria.

3. *Results for stylistic analysis.* One now understands why Janko (1982, 37) thought it "unwise" to draw conclusions from violations of HB. Nevertheless, I am prepared to defend my interpretation of the metrical features included in the body of my argument, while conceding that no purely statistical evidence has yet been adduced to distinguish Homer from Hesiod in terms of HB. What matters is that 1) the feature *kai* + correption at HB position occurs densely in Hesiod, sparsely in Homer, and is split along Delian/Pythian lines in the *Hymn* and 2) the feature clusters in the Pythian portion right after what I call the performance break (or as previous scholars had it, the textual break). Can an audience appreciate such features? Hermann (1805, 694) seems to imply that *someone* would recognize, but may take himself as the model audience: "quo quis praestantior

fruit poeta, eo diligentius ab ista caesura abstinuit.” Solomon (1985, 25), in the course of a persuasive defense of the artistry of Hesiod *Theogony* 319, argues that it is “not impossible that Homer occasionally intended violations of Hermann’s Bridge.” Of his leading examples, *Iliad* 2.246 and 2.250, he notes “perhaps it is no accident that Homer here violates Hermann’s bridge twice in five lines, the context of which refers to Thersites’ ‘skill’ in speech.” I would add that this finding concerning characterization and style is precisely in line with my own independent conclusions regarding the abnormally high amounts of correction in Thersites’ speech (Martin 1989, 112). Solomon’s fine-scale analysis leads him to suggest that at 2.250 Odysseus’ “violation of the ‘normal’ mode of metrical speech ... is meant to reflect an ironic mimicry of Thersites’ crude speech ...,” exactly when Odysseus is describing his enemy’s speech-habits. Surely if the performer of the *Iliad* can *represent* Odysseus at this point *representing* in turn the speech habits of *his* opponent, the same performer (or one pretending to be him, or an entire rhapsodic tradition of performing) can mimic the “opponent,” proletarian Hesiod.

RHAPSODIZING ORPHEUS¹

Orpheus—we know him as a poet, a musician, and a myth. Yet we must recall that all three of these media—poetry, music, and myth—arise, at some point, out of an act of performance. The last-mentioned, *mûthos*, can, in fact, be described from Homer on as the very paradigm for performance in archaic Greece: a public utterance that seeks through persuasive means to negotiate authority before a critical audience.² In this connection, it should be worth asking: exactly what sorts of performances originated and transmitted the figure of Orpheus?³

To begin with, it is clear that, in archaic Greece, cult and ritual provided a site for audiences and performers to comment on this multivalent figure. Such occasions even made use of hymnic poetry that had been attributed to the Thracian singer. There are a number of testimonia, such as the report by Pausanias (*Description of Greece* 9.27.2; cf. 9.30.12) that the Lykomidae of Phlya sang Orphic hymns to accompany rituals. Fritz Graf has thoroughly investigated the interrelation of Orpheus, Musaeus, and the Eumolpidae at Eleusis.⁴ We might be misled by the ancient evidence into thinking that private gatherings, *thiasoi*, or initiate groups were the only or even the major locus to feature Orphic poetic performances.⁵ This need not be the full picture, however. I will argue instead that Orphic poetry, whatever its private affiliations, formed part of the rhapsode's repertoire. If we assume Orphic poems played a part in this very public kind of performance, it can

¹ Originally published in *Kernos* 14 (2001): 23–33.

² See Martin 1989; Calame 1998; Nagy 1996a, 113–52.

³ This paper originated as a contribution to the annual gathering of the Coralie consortium, held May 24–26, 2000 at the University of Lausanne. It is a pleasure to thank Claude Calame and the members of this continuing scholarly *thiasos* for advice and encouragement.

⁴ Graf 1974.

⁵ On these, see West 1983, 79, 260–63.

help clarify and explain several hitherto unconnected phenomena in ancient myth and poetics.

To sharpen the point about performance, let me first juxtapose two quotations, one from Martin West, the other from Plato. While discussing the apparently unusual status of the Derveni commentator, West makes the following more general statement: “While not secret, Orphic poems seem to have had a very limited circulation. They were not a matter of general public interest. They were not taught in school or recited for public or social entertainment.”⁶ West, of course, approaches the Orphic material from a relentlessly literary point-of-view. He thinks in terms of texts, in terms of circulation of scrolls, and in terms of copying and borrowing from books. Even his imagined historical sketch for the intrusion of messy Asiatic rites into Greece calls to mind descriptions of the advent of a genteel neo-paganism in prim Edwardian Britain. Perhaps we need to apply a somewhat less anachronistic model. If, as West argues, Orphic poetry was so private, we must then ask: how can Plato describe it in terms of a broad audience’s competence to judge performances? For this is what Plato seems to be saying at *Ion* 533b–c:

Ἀλλὰ μὲν, ὥς γ’ ἐγὼ οἶμαι, οὐδ’ ἐν αὐλήσει γε οὐδὲ ἐν κιθαρίσει οὐδὲ ἐν κιθαρωδίᾳ οὐδὲ ἐν ῥαψωδίᾳ οὐδεπώποτ’ εἶδες ἄνδρα ὅστις περὶ μὲν Ὀλύμπου δεινός ἐστιν ἐξηγεῖσθαι ἢ περὶ Θαμύρου ἢ περὶ Ὀρφέως ἢ περὶ Φημίου τοῦ Ἰθακησίου ῥαψωδοῦ, περὶ δὲ Ἴωνος τοῦ Ἐφεσίου [ῥαψωδοῦ] ἀπορεῖ καὶ οὐκ ἔχει συμβαλέσθαι ἅ τε εὖ ῥαψωδεῖ καὶ ἅ μὴ.

But surely, I think, you never saw a man, when it came to aulos-playing, kithara-playing, singing to the kithara, or rhapsodizing, who is clever at performing an explanation [*exêgeisthai*] about Olympus or Thamyris or Orpheus or Phemius the Ithacan rhapsode, yet is clueless about Ion of Ephesus and cannot find anything to say concerning what he rhapsodizes well and what not.

Are we meant to assume that Socrates in the *Ion* is talking about a much more elite esoteric art of proto-literary criticism? If so, how do we reconcile his comment with the obvious point he is making—that Ion, a public rhapsodic performer, who acts in front of perhaps 20,000 people, can be judged on the same level as the legendary stars of citharodic and aulic art? It is far easier to interpret this passage as an allusion to the practices within contemporary “performances” by players and singers who attributed their

⁶ West 1983.

materials—however they might have creatively changed them—to the big-name artists of the mythic past. The inclusion of aulos performance in Socrates' comment is the key piece of evidence for this argument, for even if musical notation existed, how could anyone in the late fifth century BCE have judged the performance of a given player, unless this performance continued to be something *live*, that is to say a *re*-performance that projected itself back onto an Olympus, Orpheus, or Thamyras? We shall return to this point at the end of this chapter, when I come to talk of other mythic projections.

It may be true that we lack direct evidence that tells us unequivocally how rhapsodes included Orphic poetry in their performances. But this does not prevent us from interrogating the indirect evidence that exists. In what follows, I shall take an oblique approach to the problem, by looking first at poetry we certainly know was in the rhapsodic repertoire—Homeric and Hesiodic verse. I will be focusing, in particular, on the “catalogues of women” that appear in both corpora, and on some related codicological evidence. Then we might return to Orpheus, the performer and the myth.

The indirect approach forces us to touch briefly on a larger theoretical issue: intertextuality. The problems and delights arising from intertextuality, so familiar from later literature, appear within archaic Greek poetry as well, although this poetry in all likelihood is the result of oral composition-in-performance. Unfortunately, two modes have dominated the criticism of such poetry and affected especially the issue of intertextual relations. In the specific cases where Homer and Hesiod show close resemblances we can find: 1) a positivist, “genetic” approach that insists on reconstructing influences and uses textuality as its paradigm (Homer “read” Hesiod or vice versa) and 2) a generic approach—for example, one could claim that Homer and Hesiod both made use of pre-existing “catalogue poetry.”⁷

Both approaches, of course, have a perfectly legitimate ancestry within our discipline—these are, after all, the working assumptions behind stem-matology and dialectology. In the study of poetics they leave something to be desired. While the second method is a good deal better than the first, it is still not as fruitful as a third possible avenue of approach, which I propose now—i.e., the study of intertextual effects via performance. Or, if we need a more appropriate term, “performance interaction.” By this I mean that, even in the context of live oral composition, it is possible for one performer to “allude” to and even “quote” other traditions known to him and recognized

⁷ Examples of the first abound in Analyst critiques of Homer; I have tried the second, “generic,” approach in order to resolve a problem in Hesiod *Works and Days* and *Odyssey* Book 8: see Chapter 12 below with further bibliography on both methods.

by the audience. Furthermore, it is possible in such situations to make a point by the use of the “quoted” material in question. Again, I am arguing that all this can be done without any textualization.⁸

In *Odyssey* 11.225ff. generations of critics have seen resemblances to the style of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*. Some passages match scraps of the *Catalogue* verbatim. Take, for example, the conversation between Poseidon and his lover Tyro (fr. 31 MW = P. Tebt. 271, ed. Grenfell-Hunt):

.....[.]..Ποσειδάων λ[
τέξις δ' ἀγλαὰ τέκ]να, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀποφώ[λιοι εὐναὶ
ἀθανάτων· σὺ δὲ τ]οὺς κομέειν ἀτιτα[λλέμεναί τε.
.....[.]..ἴν' ἀγλαὰ τέκνα τ[εκ-
.....[.]..τανεμεσσητοι τε[
ὥς εἰπὼν ὃ μὲν αὖτις] ἀγαστόγῳι εμ[
.....[.]..ἔβη οἰκόνδε [νέεσθαι

Grenfell and Hunt, the original editors of the papyrus, thought, in fact, that this was a scrap of prose commentary on the *Odyssey*; Vitelli believed it was a piece of cyclic epic; in 1937, Pfeiffer identified it on the basis of content and style as coming from the Hesiodic *Catalogue*. Already in 1884, however, Wilamowitz, working from other transmitted fragments and some Berlin papyri, had seen the resemblances between the Hesiodic and Homeric *Frauenkataloge* and had begun the game of assigning priority: he favored Hesiod as the source for Homer since he claimed that the *Catalogue* was not motivated within the *Odyssey* episode and had no inherent connection with the hero.⁹

We cannot enter into the century-long debate that ensued. Given the methods implicit in priority-hunting (subjective evaluation based on impressions of style, dating by assumptions about content and attitude, etc.), we can expect indefinite results. And that is what we are given in Heubeck's contribution to the Oxford *Odyssey* commentary. In brief, he thinks the catalogue is probably an interpolation, but to remove it would require deeper cuts into the fabric of the narrative.¹⁰

If we shift methodology, however, and follow a performance approach, the catalogue style in Odysseus' recounting of his *katabasis* becomes something

⁸ Further work on this set of issues includes Pucci 1987; Martin 2001b; Korenjak 1998. Less confident about the sort of procedure I am sketching is Dowden 1996.

⁹ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1884; Pfeiffer 1937. In general, see West 1985 ad loc.

¹⁰ Heubeck et al. 1989, ad loc.; see also Page 1955b, 20–51.

rather new. Instead of a sign of textual untidiness, to be excused or mopped up, it is a key moment where the poet characterizes his own performance at the same time as he represents the ability and cunning of his internal narrator, Odysseus. And this will be relevant to our view of Orphic poetry, as well.

No one, it seems, has asked what it means that the character/narrator Odysseus is *represented as performing* precisely this kind of catalogue poetry within the *Odyssey*. Some excellent work has been done, however, on the pragmatics of the so-called “intermezzo.” Lillian Doherty makes the point that the catalogue of heroines is calculated to please the Phaeacian queen Arete; Odysseus’ interruption of his narrative, and his suggestion that it is time for all to go to bed, prompts her (rather than her husband) to get the Phaeacians to offer more guest gifts. Doherty compares *Odysseus* to Scheherezade. There are no dire consequences in this version, but the hero does end up playing on the audience’s curiosity precisely to reap rewards; because Odysseus knows his audience is a gendered one, he slyly produces a story with special emphasis on the fates and virtues of women.¹¹

William Wyatt makes a similar point: he further adduces evidence from nineteenth-century Istanbul about wandering minstrels, the *mettagh*, who collect their money just when the action of the narrative is becoming intense—to see whether the audience is seriously interested in getting to the really good stories. We might view this behavior as a classic hustle. For Wyatt, the enthralling material comprises the coming encounter with Trojan War veterans; the *Catalogue* itself is more of a tease. Both he and Doherty recognize that the nice detail of a storyteller getting paid inside the poem has a certain resonance for a real audience facing a real performer.¹²

More details could be added from comparative studies to show how closely Odysseus’ strategy resembles an oral poet’s.¹³ But let us explore the contextual hints a bit further here. When we take into consideration the precise deployment of motifs and their timing within *Odyssey* Book 11, it emerges that Odysseus resembles not just any generic oral poet: he works like a *rhapsode*. For Odysseus uses a *Catalogue of Women* in the way that real rhapsodes must have been using the genre in actual performances, probably around the end of the sixth century. In referring to rhapsodes as creative

¹¹ Doherty 1991.

¹² Wyatt 1989; see also on the thematics of the *Catalogue*, Houlihan 1994.

¹³ Most relevant are Reynolds 1995 and Slyomovics 1987.

interpreters and re-performers of a poetic tradition, I am following the lead of Gregory Nagy, who has examined the evidence in full.¹⁴

We know that catalogue material in general had a sort of optional status for some later scribes. A small group of *Iliad* papyri and manuscripts, for instance—but one that includes the important *Townleianus*—omits the Catalogue of Ships altogether; three manuscripts place it after Book 24 of the poem.¹⁵ The *Townleianus*, meanwhile, preserves a scholion that indicates some versions of the *Iliad* segued into the *Aithiopis*.¹⁶ Closer to the texts at hand in this discussion: the Hesiodic *Theogony* in at least a few manuscripts does not end sharply, but instead continues with what we recognize as none other than the *Catalogue of Women* (lines 1021–22 in West’s edition). In the case of the *Theogony*, West wants to see this as a mechanical importation, perhaps from a scholion or ancient book tag.¹⁷ But I suggest instead that in all these cases what we are seeing is neither scribal nor editorial practice (which, at any rate, it would be hard to motivate). These segues and omissions bear the marks of actual performance conditions; they could well be remnants of rhapsodic practice, the live-performance “stitching together” of songs that is alluded to in the contest of Homer and Hesiod, and to which fragment 357 MW must refer:¹⁸

ἐν Δήλῳ τότε πρῶτον ἐγὼ καὶ Ὅμηρος ἀοιδοὶ
μέλπομεν, ἐν νεαροῖς ὕμνοις ῥάψαντες ἀοιδήν,
Φοῖβον Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσάορον, ὃν τέκε Λητώ.

In Delos, then, first Homer and I as singers
made music, stitching a song in new compositions
concerning Apollo of the golden dagger, whom Leto bore.

I am proposing the following scenario: just as some performers of the *Theogony* could prolong their singing or recitation with the *Catalogue of Women* (as the textual evidence suggests), so Odysseus the performer creates suspense in the midst of *Odyssey* 11 using precisely this kind of catalogue material. The intertextual effect attunes an audience to yet another external resemblance. For at this point in the poem, rather than looking like an

¹⁴ On rhapsodes as recomposers-in-performance, see Nagy 1990, 21–29 and 1996b, 59–86.

¹⁵ See the apparatus in Monro and Allen’s Oxford *editio minor* (1920) *ad Il.* 2.484ff.

¹⁶ Monro and Allen 1920, *ad Il.* 24.804.

¹⁷ West 1966, *ad loc.*

¹⁸ On the implications of this fragment and on the stitching of verses, see Chapter 7 above, with further bibliography.

itinerant storyteller or poet, Odysseus, to an audience that knows rhapsodic repertoires, looks like a rhapsode. If, as seems likely, the performer of our *Odyssey* was *also*, at some stage in the transmission, a rhapsode, the ironic mirroring effect would be all the more striking.

At this juncture, we are enabled to circle back to Orpheus. It is well known that at least one poem called *Descent to Hades* was associated with his name—perhaps several. In these compositions, which West thinks stem from the late sixth century, it appears the poet recounted, in the first person, all that he saw on the trip down to recover his dead wife.¹⁹ Obviously, the Odyssean *Nekuia* offers parallels in terms of theme. Wilamowitz long ago, followed more recently by Böhme, asserted that the entire *Nekuia* was an interpolation by an editor interested in Orphism.²⁰ By contrast, we can imagine a case of “performance interaction” that would not depend on a scribe copying a pre-existing text, but on the fact of one performer responding to contemporary and *competing* repertoire traditions.²¹ If the *Orphic Descent to Hades* circulated not just privately, but in public rhapsodic performance, the very existence of the *Nekuia* in Book 11 may well represent a response to this competitive pressure. The much-noticed incongruities that have led Analysts to see massive interpolation might then be the result of an *Odyssey* performer’s attempt to appropriate the latest popular performance topics in his community.

While we have no *direct* evidence for such an appropriation (even though it is a common occurrence in comparative oral traditions), the dynamic of the *Odyssey* episode again provides a lead. In Book 11, Odysseus’ “catalogue” of women features one crucial difference that brings it closer to a sacred narrative by a poet who has made a descent to the underworld (as in the supposed Orphic accounts). From the proem of the Hesiodic *Catalogue* (fr. 1 MW = P. Oxy. 2354, ed. Lobel) we can see that the performer calls on the Muses in language similar to that in *Iliad* 2.484–87, the introduction to the Catalogue of Ships:

Nῦν δὲ γυναικῶν [φῦλον αἰείσατε, ἡδυέπειαι
 Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδε[ς, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο,
 αἱ τότ’ ἄρισται ἔσαν [
 μίτρας τ’ ἀλλύσαντο .[
 μισγόμεναι θεοῖσιν
 ξυναὶ γὰρ τότε δαί[ιτες ἔσαν, ξυνοὶ δὲ θόωκοι

¹⁹ On the *katabases*, see West 1983.

²⁰ See Böhme 1970, 31–59 with reference to earlier work.

²¹ For other indications of such responsiveness, see Martin 1989, 225–30.

ἀθανάτοις τε θε[οῖσι καταθνητοῖς τ' ἀνθρώποις.
 οὐδ' ἄρα ἰσαίωνες οἱ
 ἀνέρες ἦδ' ἑ γυναικες εἰ
 ὁσσομέν[οι] φρ[εσὶ] γῆρ[ας]
 οἳ μὲν δηρὸν εἰ[...].
 ἡ[ί]θ[η]ροι, τοὺς δ' εἰθ[ή]ρα εἰ[...]
 ἄ[θ]᾽ ἀνατρεῖ [νε]ότητι
 τ᾽ ἄων ἔσπετε Μ[οῦσαι
 ὅσσ[αι]ς δὴ παρελ[έ]ξατ' Ὀλύμπιος εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς

And now sing of the tribe of women, sweet-voiced
 Olympian Muses, daughters of aegis-holding Zeus,
 those who were the best at that time [
 and they loosened their girdles [
 mingling with gods [
 or at that time the feasts were in common and in common the councils
 for the immortal gods and for mortal human beings;
 and yet not equally long-lived [
 men and women [
 seeing in their spirit old age [
 the ones for a long time [
 youths, but the others at once [
 immortals youthfulness [
 Of these women tell [Muses:
 all those with whom lay [the Olympian, wide-voiced Zeus

(trans. Most 2007, adapted)

Iliad 2.484–87:

Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι·
 ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαὶ ἐστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστέ τε πάντα,
 ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν·
 οἳ τινες ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν καὶ κοίρανοι ἦσαν·

Tell me now, you Muses who have your homes on Olympus.
 For you, who are goddesses, are there, and you know all things,
 and we have heard only the rumor of it and know nothing.
 Who then of those were the chief men and the lords of the Danaäns?

(trans. Lattimore 2011)

Contrast the opening of Odysseus's list, with its stress on the autobiographical
 "I" (*Odyssey* 11.225–37):

νῶϊ μὲν ὧς ἐπέεσσιν ἀμειβόμεθ', αἱ δὲ γυναικες
 ἦλυθον, ὥτρυνεν γὰρ ἀγαυὴ Περσεφόνη,

ὅσαι ἀριστηῶν ἄλοχοι ἔσαν ἡδὲ θύγατρες.
 αἱ δ' ἄμφ' αἶμα κελαινὸν ἀολλέες ἡγερέθοντο,
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ βούλευον, ὅπως ἐρέοιμι ἐκάστην.
 ἦδε δέ μοι κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη φαίνεται βουλὴ 230
 σπασσάμενος τανύηκες ἄορ παχέος παρὰ μηροῦ
 οὐκ εἶων πίνειν ἅμα πάσας αἶμα κελαινόν.
 αἱ δὲ προμνηστῖναι ἐπήϊσαν, ἡδὲ ἐκάστη
 ὄν γόνον ἐξαγόρευεν· ἐγὼ δ' ἐρέεινον ἀπάσας.
 ἔνθ' ἣ τοι πρώτην Τυρῶ ἴδον εὐπατέρειαν, 235
 ἣ φάτο Σαλμωνῆος ἀμύμονος ἔκγονος εἶναι,
 φῇ δὲ Κρηθῆος γυνὴ ἔμμεναι Αἰολίδαο·

“Thus we two talked with one another; and the women came, for august Persephone sent them, all those that had been the wives and the daughters of chieftains. These flocked in throngs about the dark blood, and I considered how I might question each; and this seemed to my mind the best plan. I drew my long sword from beside my stout thigh, and would not allow them to drink the dark blood all at one time. So they drew near, one after the other, and each declared her birth, and I questioned them all.

“Then, you must know, the first that I saw was highborn Tyro, who said that she was the daughter of flawless Salmoneus, and declared herself to be the wife of Cretheus, son of Aeolus.”

[trans. Murray and Dimock 1995]

With his repeated insistence on sight throughout the passage (11.235, 260, 266, 271, 281, 298, 306, 321, 326), Odysseus makes the claim of autopsy that the *Iliad* performer, in the splendid *recusatio* of *Iliad* 2.484–87, declines to make, and that the Hesiodic performer also foregoes. In other words, Odysseus trumps both strategies. He has been to Hades and back, and lived to tell. He has seen what others only hear about.

The phenomenon would be parallel, in my understanding, to the assertions that the *Iliad* in Book 2 (N.B.: within another catalogue) makes about the fate of the poet Thamyras. In the terms of Homeric poetry, in competition with Heracles traditions, the bard Thamyras, and by implication poets who claim to recite his words, is defective, a loser to the Muses.²² For the evidence that there must have existed such later performers of poetic traditions attributed directly to Thamyras, we can refer once more

²² See Martin 1989, 229–30.

to the passage of Plato's *Ion* with which I began. It is worth noting that the gigantic Underworld painting by Polygnotus in the Cnidian Lesche at Delphi, dating to the mid-fifth century BCE, portrayed Thamyris as blind and dejected, with a broken lyre at his feet. In the same part of the painting, says Pausanias, Orpheus was depicted playing a kithara, with an attentive group of hearers nearby.²³ This representation, I suspect, produced a similar message of poetic denigration concerning Thamyris, but this time with Orpheus instead of Homer as the privileged poet of the pair.

We know that Hesiodic poetry was in the rhapsodic repertoire; I have argued that the Homeric catalogue in Book 11 responds to the Hesiodic form of *catalogue* narrative in a challenging, competitive way. My suggestion now is that the *Odyssey* also responds and rises to the challenge of Orphic material—the autobiographical descent of the poet—although the full range of performance contexts for such poetry is hidden from our view. The other evidence to support my idea that Orphic poetry was rhapsodic is circumstantial. Leaving aside the question of the late “rhapsodic” *Theogony* as a puzzle with an intriguing attribution, we might focus instead on an individual first, the infamous Onomacritus. Several testimonia associate him with Orphica, as also with a Peisistratean project to fix Homeric poetry.²⁴ The question is: was he also a rhapsode? That he was a poet, at least, is argued by Gregory Nagy who observes that the story of Onomacritus being caught while forging oracles fits with the assumption that he was a professional rival of the poet Lasus of Hermione.²⁵ In addition to this, I note that Onomacritus is explicitly associated by Plutarch with another character, the mysterious Cynaethus. From the precious scholion to Pindar *Nemean* 2, we know that Cynaethus was certainly a rhapsode:

Ὅθεν περ καὶ Ὀμηρίδαι. Ὀμηρίδας ἔλεγον τὸ μὲν ἀρχαῖον τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ Ὀμήρου γένους, οἱ καὶ τὴν ποίησιν αὐτοῦ ἐκ διαδοχῆς ἦδον μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ οἱ ῥαψωδοὶ οὐκέτι τὸ γένος εἰς Ὀμηρον ἀνάγοντες. ἐπιφανεῖς δὲ ἐγένοντο οἱ περὶ Κύναιθον, οὓς φασὶ πολλὰ τῶν ἐπῶν ποιήσαντας ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τὴν Ὀμήρου ποίησιν. ἦν δὲ ὁ Κύναιθος τὸ γένος Χῖος, ὃς καὶ τῶν ἐπιγραφομένων Ὀμήρου ποιημάτων τὸν εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα γεγραφὼς ὕμνον ἀνατίθειεν αὐτῷ. οὗτος οὖν ὁ Κύναιθος πρῶτος ἐν Συρακούσαις ἐραψώδησε τὰ Ὀμήρου ἔπη κατὰ τὴν ξθ' Ὀλυμπιάδα, ὥς Ἰππόστρατός φησιν.

²³ Pausanias *Description of Greece* 10.30; see Kebric 1983 for full details and bibliography.

²⁴ See Stoessl 1939.

²⁵ Nagy 1990, 172–74 and 1996b, 104–5.

“Whence the Homeridai”: In the ancient period, they called the Homeridai those of the family of Homer, who also sang his poetry by handed-down tradition. After that, these were the rhapsodes, no longer tracing their lineage from Homer. Cynaethus and those around him were pre-eminent, those who, they say, having composed many epic verses inserted them into Homer’s poetry. Cynaethus was a Chian, and was the one who wrote the *Hymn for Apollo* (among the poems assigned to Homer) and credited it to him. This Cynaethus was the first who rhapsodized the epic verses of Homer in Syracuse, during the 69th Olympiad, as Hippostratus says.

From the point of view of later generations, even in the fifth century, by which time rhapsodizing had been standardized and subject to further rules, the expansion and experimentation on traditional material as done by a Cynaethus and an Onomacritus could only be branded as forgery or falsification—hence the tone of the testimonia. It is significant that the one interpolation attributed to Onomacritus within the text of Homer as we have it is precisely in the *Odyssey* 11 underworld scene, as mentioned in the scholia to *Odyssey* 11.604 (Dindorf):

παῖδα Διὸς μέγαλοιο | τοῦτον ὑπὸ Ὀνομακρίτου ἐμπεποιῆσθαι φασιν.
ἠθέτηται δέ. ἔνιοι δὲ οὐ τὴν οἰνοχόον Ἥβην, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀνδρείαν.

“Child of great Zeus”: They say this was inserted by Onomacritus, but it has been atheized. Some say Hêbê is not the wine-pourer but his own manly vigor.”

It would make sense if Onomacritus, as a *rhapsode* of Orphic material, would have had an interest in fine-tuning a scene of *katabasis*. This does not imply, however, that Onomacritus as an “editor” interpolated the *Nekuia*.

A second piece of circumstantial evidence for the widespread, rhapsodic performance of Orphica is one of the most obvious: the Orphic theogonic passage of Aristophanes *Birds* (lines 693–702).²⁶ If such theogony material was in fact only in limited circulation for a literary elite, of the sort West hypothesizes, how could Aristophanes have expected the audience of his comedy to get the point? Even if it is, as West argues, a question of borrowed motifs—how did people know the motifs? Rhapsodizing Orpheus—assuming that Orphic material was public, performed, and popular—could provide the answer.

The final piece of circumstantial evidence brings us to myth, and especially mythic projection of performances. It has been convincingly argued by Nagy that much of what we know from the testimonia and poetry about

²⁶ See Dunbar 1995, 437–47.

Homer and Hesiod is, in fact, a retrojecting strategy employed by the very rhapsodic tradition that transmits their poetry.²⁷ It so happens that we have several intriguing stories about Orpheus as well, specifically about his role as poet. Aside from the stories that attest to the power of his kithara playing while he lived (and which are probably connected to the lore and ideology of actual kithara-performers) there are the post-mortem tales. His severed head keeps on singing; a shepherd who sleeps by his tomb sings with the voice of the dead poet; the dead Orpheus or his head is credited with oracular powers.²⁸ As well as being a powerful image of the survival of oral tradition, one with rich comparative connections in Irish and Indic lore, this myth complex can equally be a rhapsodic construct, the obverse of the way in which Homeric poetry tends to denigrate Thamyris. It is a strategy for giving status and a patina of prestige to one's performances. To say that Orpheus' head keeps on singing is another way of expressing a sociopoetic fact, that audiences and performers kept on singing and performing "Orpheus" stories and poems attributed to him. In fact, this was the claim that Terpander, a key figure in the development and performance of citharodic epic, must have made in his own work, perhaps in the seventh century. Pseudo-Plutarch *De Musica* (5.1132f) cites Alexandros (*Fragments of the Greek Historians* 273 F 77) to the effect that Terpander "took as models [*ezêlôkenai*] the hexameter verses of Homer and the melodies of Orpheus." Again, there is no absolutely direct evidence; one might object that Terpander is not a rhapsode, but in this story, it seems he is quite close to being one. As an inventor of citharodic nomes, and singer of hexameters, he might even be considered a genetic link between older poets and sixth-century performers. To make a mimesis of Orpheus, as Terpander did, is to perform at the outer limits of influence, in effect to be a first imitator: Orpheus mimed no one, we are told (*De musica* 5.1132f). That sense of reconnecting with a distant past, an aboriginal song, in turn must have cast a glow over the *mûthos*-making public performances of rhapsodes in archaic Greece. If a performer could manage to reproduce Orpheus, miming his melodies, then an audience, no matter how stolid, might respond as though charmed—surely a wish that any Ion might cherish.²⁹

²⁷ Nagy 1996a, 59–86.

²⁸ For full details and comparative materials, see J. Nagy 1990.

²⁹ On the phenomenon of "intertextuality" in an oral-traditional milieu, see now Tsagalis 2008. On the figure of Orpheus as a proto-citharode sometimes in contestation with rhapsodic traditions, see Power 2010, 268–73, 355–66.

GOLDEN VERSES

VOICE AND AUTHORITY IN THE TABLETS¹

While our understanding of the so-called “Orphic” tablets continues to improve thanks to the scrutiny of many learned proponents of *Religionswissenschaft*, the appreciation of these texts from a literary standpoint has lagged somewhat behind. What follows, therefore, are some tentative thoughts on the poetic heritage and environment of the Gold Tablet texts. The broader study of Greek poetry will be seen to advance their explication; by the same token the tablets significantly increase the available stock of Greek poetic reality—whatever their religious functions may have been.²

As the first rule of comparative studies is to know what to compare, we should begin by assuming that texts written in Greek hexameters of any time or place can and should be compared with one another.³ As a matter of practice, one can extend this principle to cover as well medieval and modern Greek texts in the *dhekapendasyllavos* meter that became the inheritor of the hexameter.⁴ The second rule of comparative studies—that one proceeds

¹ This essay is based on a paper delivered at the Ohio State University Conference *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife* (April 2006), organized by Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles-Johnston. It was also published as part of the Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics (2007), <http://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/rpmartin/040701.pdf>.

² I am grateful to Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston for the generous invitation to their 2006 Ohio State conference on the tablets, for which this paper was originally produced. For rigorous questioning and helpful comments I owe thanks to attendees on that occasion, as also to the audience (of a Spanish version) at the *XIX Simposio nacional de estudios clásicos*, Universidad Nacional de Rosario (October 2006).

³ This maxim, often cited by Calvert Watkins, guides the precise analyses in his masterwork (Watkins 1995) including his chapter on the poetics of the tablets (pp. 277–91).

⁴ On the history of this meter with recent bibliography see Letsios 2005. For a point of poetic diction in the tablets, on which medieval Greek verse can help, see below.

from an internal analysis of any given text to external comparisons—will be invoked here to require that we discover the internal structures of the tablet texts and compare them with other structures; one-off, random word equivalences are not useful unless they lead to analysis of larger rhetorical and literary structures.

Thanks to the meticulous work of Alberto Bernabé, Richard Janko, and several others, the first desideratum for studying the tablets—a thorough internal analysis—has been accomplished. Janko’s useful “archetype” of the longer texts offers us a hermeneutic tool for discussing those tablets, although I would insist that this archetype should *not* be reified into a datable, written ancestor of our lamellae.⁵ It could just as easily—and more likely—always have been a mental template underlying oral composition and transmission, one never itself textualized in the full “archetype” form. Furthermore, it represents the sum total of hexameter lines, in what we imagine as the full scenario underlying these tablets. Yet no one tablet has this entire set of lines, as can easily be seen. Instead, as is typical in oral tradition, only a portion is “recited” or “performed” on any one gold leaf.

So much for the state-of-play concerning *internal* analysis. The *external* comparison with the appropriate sphere of hexameter poetics remains to be carried out in detail. This can be done on several tiers. In what follows, the focus will be on two levels of detail. First, I shall look at type-scenes comprising a few dozen lines, especially from the *Odyssey*, in which instruction and direction are the ruling motifs. Second, I’ll explore formulaic diction at the level of individual hexameter lines or half-lines, tracing a series of resemblances, parallels, and resonances between tablet texts and a wider range of Greek epic poetry. After a few illustrations of these levels at which the small and large poems interact, I shall narrow the focus to one tablet and then conclude by making some suggestions about the authority of the narrative voice that we hear emanating from it and from its congeners.

Following Milman Parry’s breakthrough work, the discussion of type-scenes in Homeric poetry burgeoned and flourished for several decades, as shown by the master-bibliography compiled by Mark Edwards, whose own work was central in this growth.⁶ The study of one sub-category of type-scenes, those involving speech, has not progressed so far. My own interest

⁵ This key article (Janko 1984) has now been updated in Janko 2016; the original article predated the publication of some important tablets, at least one of which gives a previously unattested line. Janko’s analysis here dovetails with my own in several ways and I am largely in agreement with his conclusions on details.

⁶ Edwards 1992.

in this sort of study some years ago focused on the *Iliad*, but the present investigation will make use of its sister epic, the *Odyssey*, to analyze some comparanda.⁷ Speech type-scenes, as we may call them, differ from the usual runs of recurrent verses that describe arming, dining, getting up, and going to bed—those comfortable Hemingwayesque topics that sink into the hearer’s mind and embody “Homer.” Speech-type scenes represent more flexible but recurrent modes of handling a situation. They occur in character-voice instead of narrator-voice, although there are interesting overlaps (for instance in the *Iliad*, Achilles talks like Homer and vice versa).⁸ We might think of these scenes as rhetorical topoi, but they are not necessarily or usually in the form of arguments or Aristotelian enthymemes. Their usefulness as a hermeneutic tool when it comes to the lamellae derives from their being a node or two higher up on the narratological tree. That is to say, instead of being constituted by content and its treatment (armor, chariots, food, drink, or bed) at a particular point, the speech type-scenes are built on syntactical and pragmatic frameworks. In other words, instead of restricting us to hunting for comparable content between lamellae and epic—something that is almost by definition bound to fail given the genre differences—the employment of speech type-scenes enables us to carry out a more fine-grained approach. Thanks to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, we can easily pin down co-occurrences of adverbs, imperatives, deictics, and other speech markers, so that one can compare types of speech (commands, giving directions, assertions) that are relevant to the types of speech contained in the lamellae.

How might the corpus of tablet texts look from the angle of speech-type scenes? The neat A/B text typology that goes back to Zuntz in the 1970s broke down with the publication of more recent texts from Pelinna and elsewhere.⁹ The 2001 Spanish edition and commentary by Bernabé and Jiménez outlines a more flexible articulation of the corpus of the tablets. Using the divisions there established, one can label the shared content (according to the editors’ analysis) that marks each group of lamellae.¹⁰ Their numbers shall be matched to the following shorthand phrases representing my own speech type-scene scheme:

- L1 through L6 (= Bernabé [2004] fr. 474–84): “map and script”

⁷ Full analysis in Martin 1989.

⁸ Martin 1989, 146–205. Further on speech type-scenes, see Chapter 3 above.

⁹ On the evolving complexity of the corpus, see Bernabé 2000 and now Janko 2016.

¹⁰ See the chart, with comparative numbering, at Bernabé & Jiménez 2001, 257–58.

- L7a–b (= Bernabé [2004] fr. 485–86): “point of death”
- L8 (= Bernabé [2004] fr. 487): “greeting”
- L9–11 (= Bernabé [2004] fr. 488–91): “arrival and boast”

(Bernabé and Jiménez numbers #L12–16 are not included in my typological inventory since they are much closer to *sumbola* or magical formulae and do not seem to give us a foothold in terms of narrative or speech-act beyond the performative utterance.)

The first set (“map and script”) are those that deal with negotiating the intricate, dark landscape of the underworld. This is the most verbally rich type. It involves a set of instructions about topography concerned with finding the right spot for drinking of the Spring, and then a second strategy—what to say when you get there (hence my designator for it). We shall return to this major division later, after a brief survey and some comments on the others.

Tablets L7 a–b (“point of death” in my scheme), the famous gold leaves from Pelinna in the shape of ivy, certainly recall no specific scene in Homeric poetry.¹¹ By the very nature of the sentiment on them—“now you have died [*ethanes*] and now you have been born [*egenou*]”—they are excluded from an epic art form that gains its power from a relentless focus on death and dying, instead of on regeneration. And as one might expect, a survey of the ninety-one poets listed in the TLG canon under the generic label “epic” reveals no co-occurrence of these verbs, or even an instance of the single second-singular *ethanes*. However, there is one curious scene of virtual rebirth in the *Iliad* that can lead us on to a speech-type that is relevant, I believe, to this second tablet group. In Book 21, before all heaven breaks loose in the battle of the gods, Achilles encounters a man named Lycaon, whom he had captured and sold into slavery on Lemnos, some twelve days before. He reacts with amazement (*Iliad* 21.53–59):

ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν
 “ὦ πόποι ἦ μέγα θαῦμα τόδ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρώμαι·
 ἦ μάλα δὴ Τρῶες μεγαλήτορες οὐς περ ἔπεφνον
 55
 αὖτις ἀναστήσονται ὑπὸ ζόφου ἡερόεντος,
 οἷον δὴ καὶ ὄδ' ἦλθε φυγὼν ὑπο νηλεῆς ἦμαρ
 Λῆμνον ἐς ἡγαθήην πεπερημένος· οὐδέ μιν ἔσχε
 πόντος ἀλὸς πολυῆς, ὃ πολέας ἀέκοντας ἐρύκει.”

In anger, then, he addressed his braveheart spirit:
 “Indeed, a great miracle here I see before my eyes:

¹¹ Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987.

braveheart Trojans whom I slew
 get themselves back up from beneath the gloomy dusk.
 Look how this one fled the pitiless day
 bound up and shipped to holy Lesbos. But the sea of grey
 did not detain him, though it hold many, despite their will.”¹²

Undeterred by this *mega thauma*, Achilles shifts into killer mode and although piteously supplicated by Lycaon, rejects his pleas with harsh words: before Patroclus died, the hero says, I would have spared you, but now no enemy can escape death at my hands (*Iliad* 21.106–7):

ἀλλὰ φίλος θάνε καὶ σὺ τί ἢ ὀλοφύρεαι οὕτως;
 κάθθανε καὶ Πάτροκλος, ὃ περ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων.

But *philos*, die—you too. Why blubber this way?
 Even Patroklos died—so much your better.

The tone is interesting: *philos* is like hard-bitten battle-field talk: “sorry, pal—you die.” Not ironic, it is instead indicative of the mix of pathos and horror that is the *Iliad*. For our purposes of comparison, the follow-up speech is equally important, for after Achilles proceeds to slay Lycaon and toss him into the river, he then offers a vision of his enemy’s post-death experience (*Iliad* 21.122–27):

Lie there now with the fish to lick your wounds
 and get the blood off, little do they care:
 your mother will not lay you on the bier and wail;
 Scamander, in its whorls, will bear you to the sea’s broad gulf.
 Leaping up [*thrôiskôn*] with a rush and rippling the black wave
 some fish will eat Lykaon’s shining flesh.

Compared with the tablet verses, this is obviously the reverse of that emblem of bliss, “falling into the milk.” Curiously, there are still some verbal parallels. Lycaon (“Wolfie”) who will lie with the fishes (their licking an anti-type of the ritual cleansing of the corpse), instead of finding a safe harbor or spring, will get plenty of salt water, in the wide gulf of the sea. The Pelinna tablets use *thrôiskô* for the leap of ram and bull into the milk; the leaping fish will nibble the deceased. As well as counter-pointing the happy-death scenario detail by detail, this little speech is in effect an *anti*-lament: Achilles explicitly says that his victim’s mother will *not* place him on the bier and

¹² All translations mine unless otherwise noted.

weep over him. We should remember that the lamellae texts are also, after all, anti-laments. Rather than the frequent lament strategy about how the deceased has left his kin bereft (cf. the elaborate wake for Hector at *Iliad* 24.718–75), the “point of death” tablets in particular declare that everything gets *better* after one has died. The focus, as in Achilles’ speech, is on the experience of the deceased, not as in lament on the feelings of the bereaved.¹³

Turning more briefly to the other groupings, we might detect speech type-scenes even in these shorter lamellae texts. The “greeting” group actually comprises one tablet, Bernabé’s #L8 = fr. 487 from Thurii. It begins in good hexameter fashion (with Doric coloration), “whenever the soul leaves the light of the sun,” and after a line of somewhat obscured direction, breaks into direct address: “Hail, having suffered the experience [*pathêma*] that you had not before suffered. A god, out of a man, you have become.” The single word *khaire*, at line-initial position, draws us into a speech-type that is familiar not just from many greeting scenes in Homeric poetry and later epic, but also, more relevant, from the tradition of hexameter hymns. This is a fairly obvious parallel. The implications, however, might bear further investigation. John García has recently shown how the *khaire*-formula functions at the heart of kletic hymns as a way of pinpointing the epiphany of a god amid the longer third-person narratives that surround the formula.¹⁴ I would add that in the context of the tablets, the word *khaire* cues us to the transformation of mortal into immortal even before we are explicitly told that *anthrôpos* has become *theos*. An audience or composer may well be drawing on Panhellenic or local hymnic traditions in the composition and reception of this tablet text.

My fourth group, labeled “arrival and boast,” may be seen as an amalgam of two speech types. In point of fact, a check of the TLG shows that nowhere in epic does one find the verb *eukhomai* (“I pray or boast”) attested within a few lines of the verb *erkhomai* (“I arrive or go”), despite the neat phonic figure made by the pairing of the two verbs, which, to use a linguistics term, form nearly a “minimal pair.” This independent poetic feature of the lamella when it comes to combinations of formulaic phrases is worth keeping in mind. We are

¹³ On the tropes of lament in Homeric epic, see Chapter 14 below and Dué 2002. The speech type-scene of words directed to the dying in the *Iliad* recurs when Achilles kills Hector, but without the extended forecast about the treatment of Hector’s corpse. Hector *himself* envisions that he will be eaten by dogs near the tents of the Achaeans, and Achilles does not relieve his mind of such terrors before dispatching him (*Iliad* 22.335–36). This becomes, of course, the primary suspense mechanism until the end of the poem. On the theme and its expressions in the *Iliad*, see Segal 1971.

¹⁴ García 2002.

never dealing with mere imitations of the poetic language of epic in reading the tablets. The tradition, passed down by whatever means, is in touch with epic or other techniques of hexameter composition, but is not subservient to them. As a sign of contact, observe the recurrent positioning of *erkhomai* outside the tablet texts: it is always line-initial in hexametric verse. As a sign of compositional independence, on the other hand, we should immediately notice that the verb in the tablets (Bernabé's L9–11 = fr. 488–91) must, in fact, mean “I am coming” in the set phrase *erkhomai ek katharôn kathara* (“I come, clean from the clean”). By contrast, in the epic tradition the verb most often means “I am going,” as when Patroclus (*Iliad* 11.839) says to the wounded fighter Eurypylus, “I am going to tell Achilles the *mûthos* that Nestor commanded.” The same deictic positioning characterizes other prominent Homeric examples: a warrior goes out to get a lance (*Iliad* 13.256); Hera goes to see the edges of the earth (*Iliad* 14.301); and Eumaeus says he is not in the habit of going to town (*Odyssey* 14.373). Within epic poetry, only in medieval Greek have I found a clear usage of the verb *erkhomai* to mean “I am coming” (as it does still in Modern Greek), in a fifteen-syllable verse from the Byzantine *Achilliad* (Cod. Napol. BN III.B27, line 1584):

Take me in, Frangkos, take me in [*dhexou me*]: it is to you I come
[*erkhomai pros esena*].¹⁵

The “arrival and boast” tablets of my fourth category follow the deceased person’s announcement “I am here” with a heroic-sounding phrase, “I assert that I am yours when it comes to my blessed heritage” (*kai gar egôn humôn genos eukhomai olbion einai* = L9.3, L10a.3). Of course, the line-final formula (without *olbion*) is the most frequent way for an Iliadic hero to establish his genealogy on the field of battle. Leonard Muellner’s monograph on Homeric *eukhomai* and its meanings provides a full explication of the bi-valence of this old semantic item.¹⁶ The formula is used in specific type-scenes of extended verbal combat (often designated *mûthos*).¹⁷ What resonance, if any, does that provide when juxtaposing epic with “Orphic” texts? Perhaps we are meant to hear an authoritative utterance on the part of the newly-dead speaker who encounters Persephone, the *khthoniôn Basileia* prominent in this tablet group. The fuller scenario that we can imagine has the speaker implying, as

¹⁵ Note the co-occurrence of “come” [*erkhetai*] and “take” [*dekhesthe*, as restored by West] in tablet L.11.1–2 (= fr. 491).

¹⁶ Muellner 1976.

¹⁷ See Martin 1989, 67–86.

it were that “The ritual has worked. I belong here.” This heroic proclamation is followed in the texts of the “arrival and boast” division by phrasings that clearly recall heroic death in the *Iliad*. For instance, we have *alla me Moir’ edamasse*.¹⁸ Finally, the boast that the deceased has made it successfully to the heart of the underworld is addressed to divinities with significant names: good counselor (Eubouleus) and good fame (Euklees). The latter name is especially pertinent in a context of heroic identify and self-presentation. After all, as we shall see a bit further, the dead who bore these tablets in the grave were in every technical religious sense *heroes*.¹⁹

Let us now return to the first category, mentioned briefly above, which deserves more attention: “map and script,” describing the topography of Hades and what to do there. The *Odyssey* is more fruitful for comparisons when it comes to this category. Two scenes in particular come to mind. As indicated earlier, this tablet group, the largest thus far, is complicated by the co-existence of two tropes, the pointing out of landmarks and then the instructions concerning what the deceased bearer of the gold tablet should say. Have we anything like this in epic?

The most obvious place to look for intertexts is the journey of Odysseus to the underworld. As I have argued elsewhere, the *Odyssey*, given the evolving elaboration and textualization of the Homeric poems, was most likely already aware of and responding to a long Orphic narrative of the *katabasis* type. In generic terms, in other words, *Odyssey* Book 11 and the *katabasis* traditions are roughly related.²⁰ But let us look at the speech-type elements to explore what else might be parallel. It emerges that the *Nekuia* of *Odyssey* Book 11 is actually less productive of parallels than other passages. We have to back up a bit, to the end of *Odyssey* Book 10, to see how the entire episode of the hero’s descent features one set of instructions framing another, Circe’s advice surrounding that of Teiresias, and in fact supplementing it in crucial ways.

After telling him he must find the blind prophet whose wits are still with him, even when dead, Circe directs Odysseus to the edge of the world and tells him what to do on arrival (*Odyssey* 10.508–47). Some of the parallels

¹⁸ Compare *Iliad* 16.849, the words of Patroclus at his death; see also Calame 2006, 264–65. In a complementary view, De Jáuregui 2011 now persuasively examines the boast-formula in its relation to epic type-scenes of supplication.

¹⁹ On the heroic status of the deceased in terms of their positioning between sky and earth, see the analysis of Calame 2006, 246–48.

²⁰ Martin 2001a.

to the tablet texts L1–6 are rather obvious. There is, first, the insistent use of *entha* in initial position to mark both temporal and spatial stages in the *Odyssey* passage (10.513–17):

ἔνθα μὲν εἰς Ἀχέροντα Πυριφλεγέθων τε ῥέουσι
 Κώκυτός θ', ὃς δὴ Στυγὸς ὕδατός ἐστιν ἀπορρώξ,
 πέτρῃ τε ξύνεσις τε δύω ποταμῶν ἐριδούπων 515
 ἔνθα δ' ἔπειθ', ἦρως, χριμφθεὶς πέλας, ὥς σε κελεύω,
 βόθρον ὀρύξαι ὅσον τε πυγούσιον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ...

There Puriphlegethon flows into Acheron
 and Cocytos, which is an offshoot of Styx water—
 and a rock and joining of two roaring rivers—
 In *that* spot, hero, after drawing close, as I command
 Dig a pit a cubit square—this way and that.

Cf. 10.526–30:

αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν εὐχῆσι λίσση κλυτὰ ἔθνεα νεκρῶν,
ἔνθ' οἷν ἄρνεϊδὸν ῥέζειν θῆλύν τε μέλαιναν
 εἰς Ἔρεβος στρέψας, αὐτὸς δ' ἀπονόσφι τραπέσθαι
 ἰέμενος ποταμοῖο ῥοάων ἔνθα δὲ πολλὰ
 ψυχὰι ἐλεύσονται νεκρῶν κατατεθνηώτων.

But once you beseech the famous races of the dead
 then sacrifice sheep: one male, one female; black;
 twisting them toward Erebus, but yourself away
 toward the river's streams. Then many souls
 of those struck down with death will come.

and 10.538:

ἔνθα τοι αὐτίκα μάντις ἐλεύσεται, ὄρχαμε λαῶν,

Then immediately will come the seer, o host-leader.

This resembles the pragmatic locating function of the “archetype” phrase *entha katerkhomenai* (L1.4, L2.6) although the tablet text uses *entha* only to mark place, rather than time. Interestingly, the *Odyssey* instructions that most resemble this part of the tablet’s text come at lines 529–30 *ἔνθα δὲ πολλὰ / ψυχὰι ἐλεύσονται νεκρῶν κατατεθνηώτων*. But that is exactly where the *Odyssey* poet uses *entha* in a *non*-initial position and in the meaning

“then” rather than “there.” Once again, it is clear that we are not dealing with a simple phenomenon of poetic models and copies. In both tablet and epic texts, the underlying formula can be identified as *psukhai nekuôn* “souls of the dead.” The *Odyssey*, on the one hand, expands this phrase (529–30) with two modifiers: *pollai* and *katatethneôtôn*. The anonymous poet who composed the verse on the tablets, however, chooses to make a pun with the verb for “be refreshed; become alive”: “There, coming down, souls [*psukhai*] of the dead take solace [*psukhontai*].” The tablet verse employs the preverb *kata*—in the *Odyssey* version attached to a different verb (10.530)—by describing the souls “coming down” instead of “struck down dead.” Of course, in both the epic and tablet texts, we are dealing with trees, water, and drinking. Circe’s elaborate description does not mention the cypress tree that is so commonly featured in the tablets, but instead speaks of poplars and willows (*Odyssey* 10.510). She also gives a vivid picture of a confluence of underworld rivers. The *entha* locating that spot and the same word repeated to pinpoint where Odysseus should dig are co-relative, framing *Odyssey* 10.513–16: *there* where the waters flow, *there* dig the libation pit. In essence, the procedure parallels the tablet scenario, but in the tablet this initial refreshment stop that one encounters (like the pit Odysseus digs, both of them near trees: e.g., L1.3, L2.5) is the stop that one is told to *pass by*. It is as if the tablet poets have out-performed Circe or Homeric epic tradition by providing *two* stops rather than just one. I admit that there are distinctions in function within these proposed intertexts. The epic hero of the *katabasis* is, after all, not dead, and is seeking directions home, rather than trying to make a name for himself in the underworld. But it is significant that we can see in both epic and tablets some shared formulas, shared rhetorical strategies (the *entha* trope), and shared motifs (drinking, inclusion, and exclusion), even though these are applied to different narrative contexts.

If there is a certain predictability to finding tablet texts that are parallel to the *Odyssey*’s underworld scene, resonances are less expected in one of the poem’s more realistic episodes, the hero’s meeting on the beach with the young girl Nausicaa. Just emerging from a near-death experience, Odysseus entreats the princess and is given a bath, clothes, and finally, directions (*Odyssey* 6.255–315). Nausicaa is wonderfully talkative: she tells Odysseus that he will have to walk to town, lest people gossip about her involvement with a strange man. She says that they will pass a double *limên* (*Odyssey* 6.263, a harbor, rather than the lake as in the *limnê* of Memory in the tablet). She also fears that one of the rough sailors might mock them asking who the “fine big stranger” is who accompanies the girl. If she did not get him off

a boat, perhaps he is a god come down from heaven to answer her prayers (*Odyssey* 6.276–80). The phrase *ouranothen katabas* tempts us to think at this point of the “arrival and boast” phrase concerning the deceased person’s *genos ouranion*. It might not be so fanciful to think in terms of *katabasis* throughout this Phaeacian scene, especially when we hear from the royal princess a topographical excursus (*Odyssey* 6.291–94). There is a grove of poplar trees (*alsos* ... *aigeirôn*) with a spring (*krênê*). Odysseus is supposed to wait there. For the listening audience, the details about trees and water are pleasant enough, but that is because we have not yet experienced the details of Books 10 and 11. In “real time”—considering the chronology of the journey rather than the re-telling—Odysseus has already been to the realm of Hades and has stopped at precisely such a grove, not of Athena but of Persephone (cf. *Odyssey* 10.509–10: *alsea* ... *aigeiroi*). He is perhaps a bit perturbed by all this *déjà vu* instruction.

Afterwards, Odysseus is supposed to go to the city and make inquiries about the location of the palace (*Odyssey* 10.298: *ereesthai*). We can compare the “map and script” tablet L1.9, on which the guardians are said to ask what the deceased is seeking (*hot<t>i de exereeis*). Further details seem to tally. When her father’s house “conceals” him (6.303 *kekuthôsi*), says Nausicaa, Odysseus is to proceed through the hall to her mother Arête, who is seated at the hearth. He is to beseech her to be assured of a homecoming. The framing verb is ominous, as it is often used in mention of Hades or earth “concealing” the dead (cf. *Iliad* 23.244, *Odyssey* 3.16). Apart from this, the scenario might sound oddly familiar. To paraphrase Nausicaa’s directive more abstractly: “Go to a royal maiden; do not stop at the first place I shall tell you; go to the second place (and there pray to a female). Then you will be safe and sound.” At the risk of opening a contentious debate, I suggest that the *Odyssey* scene, while it is perfectly comprehensible by itself, would sound all the more intriguing and amusing if an audience already knew something associated with the dead and resembling our “map and script” texts. Of course, that would mean, in practical terms, some down-dating of the epics and/or earlier projections of “Orphic” tablet materials. As it stands, not much more than a century separates a possible Peisistratean text and our earliest tablet. In short, it is not impossible that the remarkable entry of Odysseus into the palace of Alcinous has been fashioned on instructions for a trip to the dead.²¹

²¹ As regards relative dating, I am in agreement with the position now articulated by De Jáuregui 2011, 273 that in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, “... the oral epic tradition was not yet completely fossilized and wholly dependent on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.” He does not, however, explore the

It is time to turn for a few minutes to the larger picture that might help orient us in thinking about the interaction of poetic compositions going on in the archaic period and later. As mentioned earlier, it seems possible that Orphic saga material in poetic form was, in fact, available in the century that the Homeric poems were taking their near-final shape—the sixth century BCE.²² I would like to sketch out how that phenomenon—the availability of Orphic poetry in rhapsodic performances—might relate to other kinds of compositions. Then we can finish off with something smaller—in fact, with a single point of shared diction—for which the larger picture should prepare us and which might illuminate a context for the tablets.

How are we to imagine that the parallels originate between Homeric epic and the Orphic lamellae? As borrowings of well-known verses? Or is there something more complex going on here? The latter seems more likely. One interesting example of several can suffice to remind us once again of the independence of the tablet-text poetic tradition, when compared with the Homeric text. The “map and script” tablets consistently retain the archaism of uncontracted a-stem genitive in the noun *Aidao*, “of Hades,” at L1.2 (*Aidao domous*), L3.1 (*Aidao domôn*) and L4.1 (*Aidao domois*). The formula “house of Hades” using this archaic genitive occurs seventeen times in Homeric verse; another seventeen instances of the genitive occur in other phrases.²³ But the *Odyssey* also has, twice, the “house of Hades” formula with the newer, contracted genitive *Aideô* (metrically trisyllabic: *Odyssey* 10.512, 23.322).²⁴ One of the instances comes in the passage already analyzed, Circe’s instructions (*Odyssey* 10.511–12):

νῆα μὲν αὐτοῦ κέλσαι ἐπ’ Ὠκεανῷ βαθυδίνῃ,
αὐτὸς δ’ εἰς Ἀΐδεω ἰέναι δόμον εὐρώεντα.

The ship [μέν] beach on the spot, at deep-whirling Ocean,
But yourself [δ’] go into Hades’ moldering house.

poetic effects in the *Odyssey* of the overlaying of thematic and formulaic materials that could still occur within such a fluid performance tradition. I would insist that the resonances travel both ways, from “epic” to tablets, but also vice versa.

²² On the “crystallization” of Homeric epic in this period, see Nagy 1996b and Nagy 2010.

²³ The Homeric instances of the formula cluster in a few books: *Iliad* 15.251, 22.52, 482, 23.19, 103, 179; *Odyssey* 4.834, 10.175, 491, 564, 11.69, 12.21, 14.208, 15.350, 20.208, 24.204, 264.

²⁴ Two other times the newer genitive *Aideô* modifies another word: *Iliad* 8.16, *Odyssey* 12.17.

The modification of a traditional formula—in this case the replacement of the older genitive by the contracted form—can often be attributed to compositional pressures brought on by the rhetorical structure of a given passage. We might venture to think that the addition of line-initial *autos* in *Odyssey* 10.512 has forced the composer to use the newer style phrasing. And if we further ask why the emphasis on *autos* was needed, part of the answer has to lie in the preposed-topic style of this couplet, contrasting Odysseus (*de*) and his ship (*men*), although it is admittedly a rather ordinary juxtaposition. This sort of compositional pressure, in turn, arises when a poet attempts more complex narratives while juggling a traditional stock of formulae. The tablet text, not needing a contrastive verbal device within its smaller narrative scope, can retain the older, longer formula with *Aidao* (the focus is on the deceased auditor; there is no boat nearby). The point is that the compositional practice of the tablet poems is, in at least some places, as old or older than that of the epics.

I would urge us to think of the lamellae, therefore, as participating in a rich synchronic and diachronic context of hexameter verse production, coupled with varied performance contexts. What I am suggesting might be pictured as a four-cornered cultural configuration. Let us think of a square with its top two corners representing “performance” genres and the lower corners representing what we may designate “performative” genres. The top line of the square connects two “long” forms, poetry that comes to us in connected texts of anywhere from 200 to 15,000 lines. Another name for these would be “rhapsodic” genres. In my suggested configuration, one corner would be occupied by poetry that we believe was subject to public performance by rhapsodes starting from at least the sixth century BCE. This corner would include Homeric epic in the broadest sense (including compositions attributed to Homer besides the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*); the Hesiodic corpus—again with such things as the *Ornithomanteia* and the *Melampodia*; the so-called Homeric hymns; and the poems of the Epic Cycle.

The other corner for “performance” poetry is allotted to Orphic “epic” or saga literature—essentially the *Argonautica* and *katabasis* traditions. This body of poetry of course is much harder to evaluate; we are forced to argue from testimonia of later date and from the much later existence of hexameter poems ascribed to Orpheus, such as the Orphic *Argonautica* and the *Lithica*. Yet we can characterize this body of compositions as “rhapsodic” in the sense of available for competitive and repeated public performance, because it is clearly associated with *rhapsoidia* already in Plato’s *Ion* (533b–c):

Ἀλλὰ μὲν, ὥς γ' ἐγὼ οἶμαι, οὐδ' ἐν αὐλήσει γε οὐδὲ ἐν κιθαρίσει οὐδὲ ἐν κιθαρωδίᾳ οὐδὲ ἐν ῥαψωδίᾳ οὐδεπώποτ' εἶδες ἄνδρα ὅστις περὶ μὲν Ὀλύμπου δεινός ἐστιν ἐξηγεῖσθαι ἢ περὶ Θαμύρου ἢ περὶ Ὀρφέως ἢ περὶ Φημίου τοῦ Ἰθακησίου ῥαψωδοῦ, περὶ δὲ Ἴωνος τοῦ Ἐφεσίου [ῥαψωδοῦ] ἀπορεῖ καὶ οὐκ ἔχει συμβαλέσθαι ἅ τε εὖ ῥαψωδεῖ καὶ ἅ μή.

But surely, I think, you never saw a man, when it came to *aulos*-playing, *kithara*-playing, singing to the *kithara* or rhapsodizing, who is clever at performing an explanation [*exêgeisthai*] about Olympus or Thamyris or Orpheus or Phemius the Ithacan rhapsode, yet is clueless about Ion of Ephesus and cannot find anything to say concerning what he rhapsodizes well and what not.

The simplest reading of this passage would see it as confirming the existence of two related discourse habits. First, it must have been a part of performance ideology and practice in the later fifth century BCE for contemporary players, singers, and reciters to attribute their materials to mythical founders of their medium.²⁵ Otherwise, why would an exegete be said to give an opinion on works by these long-dead men, just as one might do concerning the painter Polygnotus or sculptors, for whom one could still point to artifacts in naming the artist (cf. *Ion* 533a)? Of course, rhapsodes like Ion were doing the same sort of attribution in alleging that their materials descended from the Chian bard. In the absence of a publicly accessible text or score, however, the verbal and musical arts differ crucially from the visual arts, to which Socrates smoothly analogizes them in the *Ion*: they have existence only in performance and so there is much greater leeway for creative attribution. Indeed, we could say that the discourse about Homeric or Orphic art (or Olympic or Thamyrian) transmitted by performers of those genres must have been a fruitful source of the varied and contradictory lore that later shows up in our “biographical” testimonia, as in pseudo-Plutarch *De musica*. Another sort of discourse, intersecting with such performer-based genealogizing, was clearly an exegetical tradition carried on by the very performers and itself a matter of implicit, if not explicit, competition. Ion prides himself on speaking better than Stesimbrotus or any other commentator about Homeric art; dramatic “interpretation”—how to perform Homer—thus led seamlessly into critical interpretation—*why* one recited what one did, what “Homer” meant.²⁶ If, as the *Ion* passage most likely indicates, Orphic poetry was recited or sung in

²⁵ See Martin 2001a, 24–25.

²⁶ For a detailed examination of this and related phenomena spurring the rise of Greek literary criticism, see Ford 2002, especially 68–72.

public, the respective sequence of attributions in the passage indicates that its medium was probably *kitharôidia*. It is worth pointing out, however, that the “bard” Phemius, whom Socrates alludes to as a rhapsode at *Ion* 533c, is in fact presented in the *Odyssey* as singing while playing the phorminx (*Odyssey* 1.153–55). In other words, he is typologically a citharode.²⁷ The further example of Terpander, inventor of “citharodic nomes” in hexameter, shows that material could easily jump the species divide, from song to recitation, in either direction.²⁸ At any rate, whether sung or recited, it is not inconceivable that Orphic material and epic material traveled on the same public performance circuits, with bards and citharodes performing at festivals from Chios to Delos to Epidauros—perhaps even at Eleusis.²⁹ This would have led to interaction between the two types of poetry at the upper “corners” of our performance square. It would also, naturally, have meant that performers of “Orpheus” were also Orphic interpreters. Consequently, it would not be far-fetched to imagine the composer of the exegesis of Orphic cosmogony found in the Derveni papyrus as himself an Orphic bard.³⁰

Such interaction between brands of public poetry could have led to the parallels we have noted between the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, on the one hand, and specific tropes in the Orphic tablets. The imagined long-form, public Orphic compositions like the *Argonautica*, may have been the mediating locus. One possibility, for example, is that the short-form tablet texts fed into narrations of a *katabasis* type. One can imagine a katabatic poem in which Orpheus enacts (in the manner of Odysseus) the “directions” found in our tablet texts. By the same token, the tablet texts might echo formulas and content once found in an Orphic long-poem about an underworld visit. The key hypotheses are, first, that this exchange of ideas and phrases was most likely an

²⁷ On Phemius as proto-citharode, see Power 2010, 185, 210. For the synonymy of phorminx and *kithara*, see Chapter 5 above.

²⁸ Glaucus of Rhegium in his historical work *On Poets* apparently located Homer chronologically between Orpheus and Terpander, perhaps reflecting late fifth-century thought about the affiliations of the recited and sung hexametric modes: see Ford 2002, 139–42.

²⁹ Again, for details see Martin 2001a. On the Orphic poetic heritage as it relates to Eleusis, see the fundamental work of Graf 1974. One could speculate that such traveling “Orphic” performers (artistic and/or religious figures), parallel to rhapsodes, provided to local communities or believers the poetic materials that appear on the widely dispersed tablets.

³⁰ Ford 2002, 76 notes that the Orphic exegesis of the Derveni papyrus “replicated the esoterism of the songs themselves,” but stops short of conjecturing that the author of the former was also a singer of the latter. On various rhapsodes (such as Stesimbrotus) who have been proposed as possible authors of the Derveni commentary, see Janko 1997. Calame 2014, by contrast, distinguishes between “rhapsodic” voice and exegetical style in the papyrus.

oral, rather than script-based process; and, second, that it was not a one-way process. From what we know of cultures where stylized, formulaic texts are used for both ritual and entertainment purposes (for example, in India and south Asia, with regional employments of “epic”), there is a constant and highly productive interplay among the various expressions of mythic material—short and long, poetry and song, ritual, lore, anecdote, monuments, festivals, and tomb-cult.³¹

This brings us to the bottom line of the proposed square. Here I would place two short forms that were crafted, as far as we can tell, for a functional purpose. These are the gold tablets—to ensure a smooth transition into the afterlife—and another form of hexameter poetry, unjustly neglected: the Delphic oracles. Despite the skepticism of Fontenrose and some others, there is no good reason to doubt that those who sought advice from Apollo could be given actual poetic responses.³² At the same time, there is of course evidence that oracular responses were also made in short non-poetic forms, as short as a word or two. The lead tablets at Dodona come to mind. It is worth noting, in this regard, that a similar bifurcation marks the Orphic tablet tradition, some featuring poems that are about the length of oracular responses, others with single words. I would want to pull into this orbit, as well, the astragaloi found at Delphi and on display in the museum at the site. These bone dice are inscribed with a few letters or, in some cases, short words: *Gê* (“earth”); *Nux* (“night”), Thetis, and Akhilleus, among others³³ If one accepts a possible parallel to another laconically inscribed set of markers, the Olbian Orphic ivory tokens, we may want to push the analogy and think of games (sacred or profane) in both locales, or even funeral customs.³⁴ But the main point is this: just as it has been shown that the hexameter *oracle* tradition forms a coherent corpus and, most importantly, one that is independent of Homeric verse in diction and technique, so the hexameter “Orphic” tablets might easily form a tradition independent from that of either Homeric epic or even long Orphic poems. This is not to say that there is no contact between the corners: the figure of the square should suggest four communicating corners, rather than random points in space.

³¹ Among the richest recent descriptions of such interactions is Hildebeitel 1999.

³² For an argument in favor of original poetic oracles, see Maurizio 1997 with further bibliography.

³³ Of the more than 25,000 knucklebones found in the Corycian cave, thirty-one are inscribed with names: see Amandry 1984, 370–78. For the use of astragaloi in divination ritual, see the study by Graf 2005 and on similar finds in other sanctuaries, see Buidrick 2014, 681–82.

³⁴ On the tablets, see Zmud’ 1992.

The square as a hermeneutic device can also make us think about the parallels between Orphic tablet texts and hexameter oracle texts at the level of phrase and diction. This is a project for further investigation at length. Initial probing, however, turns up a few curious resemblances, one of which brings us back to the notion of the *hêros*. Consider Fontenrose Q69, a “quasi historical response” according to his typology, which was transmitted through Plutarch’s *Life of Solon* (9.1) and that, Fontenrose thinks, may have come from Hermippus or directly from Androtion.³⁵ It gives authoritative directions for hero cult: specifically, to propitiate the heroes of Salamis:

ἀρχηγούς χώρας θυσίαις ἥρωας ἐνοίκους
ἴλασο, τοὺς κόλποις Ἀσωπιάς ἀμφικαλύπτει,
οἱ φθίμενοι δέρονται ἐς ἡέλιον δύνοντα

Leaders of the land, the resident heroes, with rites
propitiate, whom the Asopian plain hides in its bosom,
those who, having perished, look toward the setting sun.

The Plutarch story presents Solon as proceeding to sacrifice to Periphemus and Cychreus, two local insular heroes, secretly at night, as a way of ensuring his success in eventually taking over the island. Compare the text of the tablet from Entella (L2 = fr. 475 Bernabé). The first partial lines from this tablet refer mysteriously to *mJemnême<n>os hêrôs*, a “mindful hero” and then mention “darkness to embrace.” The syntax is somewhat unclear. It is worth pointing out the occurrence, in the oracle response to Solon, of similar diction within two lines, with forms of the verb *amphikalupsai* in the same metrical slot. In context, the tablet differs from the oracle inasmuch as one instructs the dead, and the other instructs the living about how to worship the dead. But going a bit further, we can say they both really deal with the same topic: the proper behavior associated with underworld divinities.

Here we can finally return from the big picture of the sociology of archaic performance to the smaller scale of poetic diction. It seems not to have been suggested that *memnêmos hêrôs* is a direct address to the recipient of the Entella tablet: “Mindful of this, hero—you should do the following ... before—or after—darkness embraces [you].”³⁶ A modest proposal that we

³⁵ Fontenrose 1978, 326.

³⁶ For a different rendering, supplying a third-person verb (“let the hero get this written down”), see Janko 2016, 109, who, however, does not take into account the epic parallels I have cited. Restoration of a third person would not be necessary if we assume the opening of the Entella tablet

should, in fact, read the line in this way is based on two additional speech habits found in hexameter poetic traditions.

First, it is clear that the participle *memnêmenos* can function most often with a genitive or infinitive in a command to “be mindful” of some important fact or action: woodcutting, plowing, and so forth (cf. Hesiod *Theogony* 562, *Works and Days* 422, 616, 623). The essence of Hesiod’s advice to his brother Perses is summed up with the participle in *Works and Days* 641–42:

τύνη δ’ ὦ Πέρση, ἔργων μεμνημένος εἶναι
ὥραίων πάντων, περὶ ναυτιλίας δὲ μάλιστα.

You must be mindful of all works in their season,
Perses—especially when it comes to seafaring.

Note that in this and several other verses, *memnêmenos* is precisely in the metrical slot where Frel’s restoration puts the word on the Entella lamella.³⁷

Second, we can see from the Homeric examples that there are speech situations in epic where the word *hêrôs* functions as a vocative. At *Iliad* 11.838, Patroclus asks his companion Eurypylus “how shall this be? What shall we do?”

πῶς τὰρ ἔοι τάδε ἔργα; τί ῥέξομεν Εὐρύπυλ’ ἦρωες;

In most of its occurrences, the vocative *hêros* comes at line-final position, just as in the text from Entella (e.g., *Iliad* 10.416, 11.819). Even more significant are the addresses of the god Apollo to the hero Aeneas (*Iliad* 20.104), given the relative status of the interlocutors; and that of Menelaus to Telemachus (*Odyssey* 4.312), which like the Entella tablet involves a question-and-answer structure, the older man asking “what need led you here?” followed by the vocative (τίπτε δέ σε χρεῖῳ δεῦρ’ ἦγαγε, Τηλέμαχ’ ἦρωες). Compare, without the vocative, the question of the *phulakes* to the deceased in text L4.6 (= fr. 477 Bernabé, lamella from Pharsalus): *ho ti khreos eisaphikaneis*. Nor should we forget that the vocative *hêrôs* is also used in at least one *Odyssey* directive passage already analyzed (Circe to Odysseus at *Odyssey* 10.516) and

ran something like “When he is on the point of death, say this ...” It seems impractical at best for the afflicted individual to consider having a tablet engraved only at death’s door.

³⁷ Frel 1994, 184. The word also occupies the slot before the final foot of the hexameter in Hesiod *Theogony* 562 and *Works and Days* 616.

possibly another (Nausicaa to Odysseus at *Odyssey* 6.303).³⁸ Apart from the Homeric tradition, it is interesting that the *Thebais*, a lost epic of the archaic period, combined instructions (apparently by the mantis Amphiaraus) with this vocative (fr. 4):

πολύποδός μοι, τέκνον, ἔχων νόον, Ἀμφίλοχ' ἥρωρ,
τοῖσιν ἐφαρμόζειν, τῶν κεν κατὰ δῆμον ἵκηται,

Child, adapt to those whose town you come to,
having the disposition of the octopus, hero Amphilocheus.

The late poems attributed to Orpheus might have been considered a prime source of parallels for the diction and rhetoric of the tablet texts, but they turn out to provide fewer speech parallels than one wishes. The *Lithica* (line 404) uses the vocative *hērōs* to introduce a new section of didactic material, while slightly later verses have the word at the line-end (Ἀλλὰ σύ γ' ἥρωρ, 418) modified by and in close proximity to the participle πεφυλαγμένος “protected” (419). For this deployment, compare the tablet L8.2 from Thurii (fr. 487 Bernabé), which has the same participle in the same position. The context is about directions to go out “well protected as to all things” in both the Orphic *Lithica* and the Thurii text, although the former is talking about snake-protection through the potency of siderite.

Where, then, do these parallels take us? What can we conclude on the level of cultural practice after working up the philological analysis? I have argued that a close reading by way of type-scenes and poetic diction produces interesting parallels. I have further constructed a hypothetical performance “square” to suggest how the longer poetic genres and the shorter sub-genres (including the tablets), the composers and their techniques, can all fit together. Let me end with an observation about the “voice” behind these texts that we can begin to hear if we listen closely.

There has been some consensus that the “voice” speaking the tablet texts is none other than that of Orpheus. He was after all the heroic survivor of descent to the underworld and also was known as a poet of hexameters.³⁹ Who would be better placed to speak such wisdom? However, I would like

³⁸ Commentators attempt to read *hērōs* in *Odyssey* 6.303 as genitive, with the preceding name *Alkinoos*, although this would involve an unparalleled form. The situational parallel with the Circe episode, in which the undoubted vocative at 10.516 occurs, may well motivate a *vocative* at 6.303; the scholiasts *ad loc.* interpret *hērōs* as vocative, to Hainsworth “a desperate expedient” (Heubeck et al. 1988, 312).

³⁹ See Riedweg 1998.

to question somewhat this monophonic position, attractive as it may be. Looking back at the pragmatics of the speaking situations—who is using which words in what situations—when we compare epic and other hexameters, it seems that the evidence provides us with a series of speakers who can instruct their listeners not so much because they are divine authorities as because they are (or are *also*) close acquaintances: Nausicaa, for example, in the *Odyssey*, or Circe, the lover of Odysseus. Those who use the *memnêmos* or *hêrôs* formulas are Hesiod to his brother Perses, Patroclus to his companion, and Amphiarus to his young addressee. In sum, the speech exchange in these examples does depend on one person knowing more, but the knowledge is presented on a deeply human level, *not* from an unbending authority. We are hearing in the tablet texts the voice of intimate persuasion, that sort of talk that Homer calls *pukinon epos*.⁴⁰ This is the sort of talk whispered in the ear of a friend or spoken in a small intimate circle, the *epos* that Andromache had hoped in vain to hear from her husband before his death (*Iliad* 24.744). It is advice, not dogma. Orpheus could have been imagined as singing these tablet verses to his followers. But just as easily, I propose, Pythagoras could have spoken them. We do, after all, have gnomic directions ascribed to the mysterious philosopher.⁴¹ Nor should we forget that one ancient tradition dating back to Ion of Chios in the fifth century BCE claimed that Pythagoras made the poems that were attributed to Orpheus (Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Philosophers* 8.8). If we believe Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* 1.131.4), a Pythagorean was actually responsible for the “Orphic” poem describing a descent to Hades. Given these hints about voices and texts, authorship and authority, is it unreasonable for us to conclude that the famous Golden Verses of Pythagoras were not simply a Golden Rule, in which the adjective is a dead metaphor, but Golden because they resembled—or were—these very verses from the tombs of the ancient dead, inscribed on fragile sheets of gold?

⁴⁰ On the semantics of this formula, see Martin 1989, 35–37.

⁴¹ For a summary and further bibliography, see Riedweg 2002, 120–23.

III

HESIODIC CONSTRUCTIONS

HESIOD AND THE DIDACTIC DOUBLE¹

*Tu le connais, lecteur, ce monstre délicat,
Hypocrite lecteur—mon semblable—mon frère—*

That didactic poetry is as complex as other literary forms has become an acceptable proposition. Now it is time to explain how this complexity operates, how the pragmatics of the form entwine with the intricacies of cultural contexts, what this quintessentially “engaged” poetry aims at, how genre-mixing and tonal shifts can create as highly textured a surface as those of epic, dramatic, or lyric poetry. The *Works and Days* of Hesiod, the crystallization of an ancient Greek “advice” tradition, should give pause to those who like their Greek literature to evolve nicely out of the primitive.² Already at the head of the stream of didactic in European literature, Hesiodic poetry displays the high style of epic, the stylized first-person of lyric, and—the focus of this chapter—a dramatic structure enacted as a two-way conversation

¹ Originally published in *Synthesis* 11 (2004): 31–53. Translations of Hesiod are based on the translation by G. Most, with some modifications.

² Primitivist assumptions about Hesiod’s inability to be strictly logical underlie Havelock 1966 and West 1981. I hesitate to use the term “didactic” for several reasons: the other surviving poems closest to Hesiod are clearly more interested in giving moral and political advice, rather than technical instruction (Theognis, Solon, Tyrtaeus); even closer are passages within Homeric “epic” (another problem term; see Chapter 1 above) in which *paraenesis* is represented. In short, we are dealing with a genre of discourse rather than an identifiable literary type; on this, see Martin 1984a.

of which we are privileged to hear just half, but meant to know the rest.³ Why not read it with at least the same attention one gives Baudelaire?⁴

Of course, the Eurocentric viewpoint is limiting. Long before Hesiod, didactic fictions figured in the verbal art of Sumerians, Akkadians, and Egyptians.⁵ As has been shown in the case of Hesiod's theogonic poetry, this flourishing Near Eastern art influenced Greek. There is, however, little point in tracing parallels unless they can tell us something further about the idiosyncratic inscapes of the works themselves. I shall make use of some parallels to highlight such differences further on. But to catch the distinctive quality of Greek didactic poetry we must first step back into the extra-literary and step aside, for a comparative perspective.⁶ From this angle, the complexity of didactic finds its closest analogue in the poetics of myth. Limited only by the previous experience of real audiences and the capability of performers, both didactic and myth make use of fictive audiences and tellers to explore the ethical alongside the metaphysical and cosmological, while locating all three in the ordinary. Perhaps this is not accidental; just as there appear to be no societies without some form of socially embedded narratives that we can identify, at some level, as stories of belief, none seems to lack didactic traditions. Often the two combine. Sometimes the didactic moment emerges in a fleeting line within a mythic poem:

The hummingbird is good and big.
So that's the way it is;
there were workers in hot country.
They were burning bean pods.
The fire could be seen well, it was so tall.
The hummingbird came,
it came out
it came flying in the sky.
Well, it saw the fire;

³ For a careful analysis of the structural features of passages involving the addressee, see Schmidt 1986, who is, however, not interested in the literary pragmatics of the problem. For fuller comparison to lyric, see Arrighetti 1975, 5–36. This is not the place to rehearse all the arguments in favor of Hesiod, his brother, and their proceedings as fictional constructs, on which see especially Nagy 1992, 36–82. Suffice it to say that whether or not the poem has an historical basis, while fascinating in itself, has no relevance for interpretation. All we have is the text.

⁴ Perhaps we do not think of Baudelaire as “didactic,” yet the poem he chooses to introduce *Les Fleurs du Mal* is a catalogue, in excellent Cynic diatribe style, of *la ménagerie infâme de nos vices*.

⁵ See, e.g., Longman 1991 and the survey of Near Eastern material in West 1978, 3–15.

⁶ I am encouraged in taking this comparative approach, since we have no evidence for an explicit native poetics for “didactic”: see Schuler and Fitch 1983.

its eyes were snuffed out by the smoke.
 It came down
 it came down
 it came down, so that they saw it was big
 Don't you believe that it is little, it is big.

This portion of a simple-sounding poem from Zinacantán (a *municipio* in the state of Chiapas, Mexico) opens with description: the hummingbird is good and big. This is “the way it is,” a fact about the cosmos—albeit counter-intuitive, we might think, to anyone who has seen hummingbirds. Following the fact, which is put in “constative” form, comes a miniature story of the unspecified past that functions at the same time as an argument.⁷ How do we know the bird’s size? Once upon a time “they saw it was big.” And then a “directive,” the expected form of didactic utterance: “Don’t you believe that it is little” Belief, proof, teaching—all are so artfully blended that it is impossible to pin down the poem with a genre label.

One thing Mesoamerican anthropologists can relate about this composition is its symbiotic relation with myth.⁸ The hummingbird is associated with the god Huitzilopochtli, who is in turn an image of the sun during spring and summer. Furthermore, hummingbirds are known for their fierce territoriality and thus, in local belief, represent warriors: a Zinacantecan man is advised to eat the heart of the bird before fighting. But the sun god is also a warrior, whose iridescence—like the bird’s coloring—changes under different conditions. And the hummingbird is “hot”; the gift of a dead bird, tied with green ribbon, can warm your lover’s heart. And so on. The deeper one pursues this associative logic beneath the Zinacantecan poem, the less surprising does it seem that the hummingbird is so emphatically “big.” As Eva Hunt demonstrates in her monographic explication of this little composition, the line in the poem represents the enduring worldview of a pre-Hispanic ritual and agricultural calendar that celebrates and observes the waxing of the sun/god/bird during a specific time of year.

How does this ethnographic perspective help us read Hesiod? Most importantly, it allows one to broaden the area of analysis: not just the overtly “directive” but the “constative” descriptive and narrative portions of poems

⁷ I choose these speech-act terms in an attempt to bring more specificity to stylistic analysis. For further illustrations, see Martin 1989; for an extension into social history, see Ober 1989. A minimal typology of speech-acts can provide an anchor and organizing principle when exploring art-forms that make the variation of surface expression into an aesthetic ideal.

⁸ See E. Hunt 1977, 52–111; the full text of the poem is on pp. 29–30.

like the *Works and Days* and the *Theogony* can be examined as didactic, because all the segments of these poems collaborate in the transmission of cultural norms: teaching is more than reeling off imperatives. We can go further: didactic becomes compelling precisely through its affiliation with an underlying contemporary narrative. If the narrative becomes part of the directive message of the poem, as happens with the *Works and Days*, then it has the same status as myth within its poem. It is, in effect, myth in the making, a conscious display of the themes and motifs one finds in stories about *illud tempus*, but crafted into the frame of the *hic et nunc*. These are not, in other words, narratives skewed in some way by their time difference, but beautifully complementary tellings of the same basic story, featuring variations in addressee and deixis such as one can notice between epic and lyric expressions of the same story.⁹

It is the foundation narrative—or, in these terms, “myth”—of the *Works and Days* which will be my focus: namely, the story, only partially explicit, of the poet’s ongoing relationship with his brother Perses, the poem’s addressee. Though often noticed, the unusual nature of this story remains unexplained. It is uniquely Hesiodic: when compared with other wisdom texts from traditional cultures, the *Works and Days* frame-narrative stands out because it does not represent the message of the poetry in the form of instructions by a father to a son, king to prince, or tutor to pupil.¹⁰ The poem never envisions such asymmetrical, generational transmission. Jenny Strauss Clay approaches this interpretive question but leaves it open in a footnote to her recent study of the poem: “The more equal fraternal relationship between speaker and addressee (we do not even know whether Hesiod was older than Perses) may be significant: what is the basis for Hesiod’s authority to instruct his brother?”¹¹ My answer, in brief, will be that the “myth” of Perses is the message. Vastly richer than the bumper-sticker message (“Question Authority”—to which one must instantly reply “Says who?”), the poem nevertheless empowers in the same way. By the conclusion of his performance, the speaker of the poem has not only constructed his authority as equal to that of Zeus, but also ironized it nearly

⁹ For the fundamental distinction between *mythopoiia* (reshaping of received myths) and *mythoplasia* (invention of new poetic myth) I am indebted to the precise and illuminating work of Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi, particularly her study of Sappho 16 LP in Peponi 1995. On the lyric background of the *Works and Days*, see Chapter 11 below.

¹⁰ See West 1978, 34.

¹¹ J. S. Clay 1993. Stein 1990, 26 notes the oddity of the brother figure but takes it as confirmation that Hesiod really had a brother, who is not a persona.

out of existence. Consequently, the addressee can more realistically have the chance of becoming like his advisor, and does not have to wait for years to test his wisdom (the long-range assumption of the generational model). The poem's lyric technique, and its dialogic format, require change and assent in the here-and-now.

The choice of "brother" to stand for the Other of the didactic addressee is thus far from arbitrary. Indeed, it would appear in the poem's terms to be inevitable; or, at least, the poet has structured this composition in such a way that the cosmos itself emerges as ineluctably double (with consequent dilemmas). After exploring this theme of doubles as it shapes the preliminary myths of the poem and affects some later portions, I shall address the dramatic function of the merging of the pragmatic frame (an argument between brothers) with the poem's narratives about twosomes. Finally, I shall take up a few extra-dramatic questions about the further affiliations of Hesiodic verse, in order to speculate on Hesiod's *real* brothers.

Trio for Doubles

The poem proper begins with what sounds like a correction (*Works and Days* 11–12):

Οὐκ ἄρα μόνον ἔην Ἐρίδων γένος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν
εἰσὶ δύο ...

So, there is not just a single race of Strifes: there are two on earth.

If we cared neither for voice nor subtlety, it would be enough to read this as a footnote to the *Theogony*, or a clumsy way of expressing what the poet *really* wanted to say.¹² More to the point is the tone created in the text at hand by the joining of particle and imperfect tense, a usage that Denniston describes as "denoting that something which has been, and still is, has only just been realized."¹³ This is, first of all, a conversation, and one that is on-going, with an edge to it. Homeric examples of the speech strategy occur, significantly, at tense moments when one speaker wants to vent his anger: Achilles replies to Odysseus (*Iliad* 9.316), "So, there is no

¹² West 1978, 142 says Hesiod had the idea of saying, "There is such a goddess as Emulation" but then realized this was not the same as the Eris mentioned in *Theogony* 225ff, and so thinks aloud while correcting himself.

¹³ Denniston 1950, 36.

gratitude for fighting always”; Achilles in a troubled reply to the “great fool” Patroclus (*mega nêpios Iliad* 16.46 and *meg’ okhthêsas* 16.48) bitterly recalls Agamemnon’s theft but concedes, “so, it’s not possible to be angry forever” (16.60); Glaucus berates Hector (*Iliad* 17.141 *khalepôî ênipape muthôi*), “so, you fall far short of battle-power” (*Iliad* 17.142). Thus Hesiod (as I shall call the speaker of the *Works and Days*) begins by bristling. “So [contrary to what I, or you, used to think] there is *not* just a single *genos* of Eris.” The undertone here: someone has made me realize differently and I do not like it. Hesiod’s response—I shall not call it “teaching”—is to complicate: things are not as simple as they might have seemed. In fact, they are relentlessly duple, as the text proceeds to illustrate, and does so not just when it comes to Strife, but in a mythic sequence that is triple.

First, the two Erides. At this early point in the poem, perhaps the traditional audience knows Hesiod is arguing with a brother, perhaps not (line 10 is not revealing). We do know, however, that this is a conversation in which one speaker claims the authority to attempt speaking truth to another, who bears the ominous name “Wrecker.”¹⁴ Furthermore, we soon get the sense that the addressee resembles one of the Strifes. The tone of voice that I have just mentioned is, after all, that which one uses to blame somebody. The first detail about the double Strife concerns precisely this topic: the good is praiseworthy “if one notices” (νοήσας, 12) while the bad is to be blamed (ἐπιμωμητή, 13). The bad Eris, in addition, fosters evil war and increases conflict (δῆριν ὀφέλλει, 14). Within a short space, the phrase is repeated with reference to the idle behavior of Perses, who neglects work in order to be on the sidelines at public wrangling and disputes (29).¹⁵ Once his livelihood is assured, says the poet, Perses might “increase conflict” in this way (33). But for now, he should pay attention to settling the *neikos* within the family (διακρινώμεθα νεῖκος, 35). The contrast is doubled: alongside the traditional distinction in blame-discourse between useless talk and necessary action (see, e.g., Aeneas to Achilles on *neikea*, *Iliad* 20.251–57), there is the contrast between quarrels over other people’s goods (κτῆμασ’ ἐπ’ ἄλλοτ’ οἰοῖς, 34) as opposed to the in-house fraternal dispute. The implied directive to Perses is therefore two-fold: don’t listen to disputes; work; but (first) pay attention to *this* dispute. The further implication, expressed by the initially puzzling line “for you there will no longer be a second time to act this way”

¹⁴ On the mythic and poetic resonances of the name, see Nagy 1992, 74–75. For another resonance, see the last section of this chapter.

¹⁵ Lardinois 1995, 202 has noted the parallel phrasing.

(34–35), is that proper attention to the internal settlement will soon convince him of the value of working rather than disputing. There is nothing illogical about the train of thought.¹⁶ The key lies in the assimilation of Perses to the “bad” Eris that keeps him from listening to the serious advice of his brother. The adviser, as we might expect, is at the same time assimilated to the praise-worthy Eris. For both of them rouse men to work (20), the good Eris by inspiring emulation of its farm-centered wealth (21–22). Competition is a good thing, for potters, craftsmen, beggars—and poets (24–26). Given the last-named example of beneficial agonistics, an audience cannot help but identify Hesiod with good Eris. In this light it is significant that “good” Eris is rooted in the land and is better (*ἀμείνω*) for mortals (19), characteristics that mark the speaker’s discourse (about land management *passim*, and what is “better,” specifically at, e.g., lines 314, 320, 776). In sum, the talk of Eris which opens the poem is a rhetorically artful “indirect directive” that works by matching the feuding brothers of the moment with their mythic and theogonic template (given a change of gender). The implicit message is also good therapeutic discourse: these disputes have *always* happened in families. This strategy is part of Hesiod’s effective *pre*-didactic rhetoric, aimed at solving a would-be adviser’s first problem: getting the hearer to listen.¹⁷

Let us move now to the second and third set of doubles, which are embedded in the story of Pandora. Like the story of the dual Eris, this myth takes us back to the early constitution of the world. Humans labor to get a living because Prometheus once tricked Zeus (42–48). But their ultimate punishment, in the form of pains, ills, and disease from Pandora’s jar, only spread through the world because Epimetheus failed to heed Prometheus’ warning about accepting a gift from Zeus (83–89). The audience is not told that Epimetheus is the brother of Prometheus. Then again, at this point we have not heard in so many words that Perses is Hesiod’s brother. The parallel omissions of this known detail of sibship function to draw the pairs closer in the composition. Again, the myth as presented does more than give

¹⁶ I disagree with West 1978, 37 on the logic involved and with his interpretation of lines 34–35 (*ad loc.*), which he apparently takes as a reference to Perses’ potential for prolonging the *fraternal* conflict. The point is not that Perses likes dispute, but that he is not directly involved in the one dispute that can help him. Hesiod’s is a protreptic argument saying why Perses should *become* a direct addressee in the first place.

¹⁷ Another double lurks here, inasmuch as this appeal to Perses is represented as the result of an apparently failed intervention by the “kings” whom Perses allegedly bribed by skimming something in addition to his take of an original division (lines 37–39). The legal status of the earlier proceeding is of less interest than its rhetorical role in this text, as a foil to focus attention on the absolute necessity for listening *now*.

us background for Hesiod's gnomic utterances; it has a rhetorical function, too. If the Eris explanation worked to focus Perses' attention on the present *neikos*, the tale of Prometheus takes the next step, warning of catastrophe if a brother's word is not taken. This connection to the frame-narrative can explain why the role of Epimetheus is incorporated prominently in the telling of the Pandora story within the *Works and Days*, while in the *Theogony* it is restricted to an allusion within a genealogy (*Theogony* 511–12), although the creation of Pandora is told also in that poem (570–90).

Epimetheus thus enjoys a reputation as much as his brother, albeit the reverse. Neither is found blameworthy. The rough equality between them characterizes the third set of doubles as well, Zeus and Prometheus. It is legitimate to fill out the myth with details from the *Theogony*, as we can assume an audience for this poetry would draw on a similar knowledge of tradition. In this light, the further resemblances to the pairing of Perses and Hesiod become clearer. The original deception by Prometheus occurs at a division (*Theogony* 537 *dassamenos*); the *Works and Days* dispute originates the same way (37 *edassameth'*).¹⁸ The elaborate competition carried out with gift and deceptive counter-gift finds a parallel in the "real" story's detail about Perses' bribe, another flawed exchange (*Works and Days* 38–39).¹⁹ It would seem, then, that the passage presents a two-sided trickster: smarter than his brother (like Hesiod) but conniving to win (like Perses). Most important, however, is the broader picture of Zeus and Prometheus as co-equal creators, for this gives a glimpse of hierarchy subverted, then solidified, in mythic time. I stress their creating role because there is some reason to assume that yet another mythic detail of the Prometheus story, his shaping of mankind out of clay, underlies the text in lines 47–104. Specifically, the next segment of the text, the Myth of the Ages, begins "If you want, I shall sum up *the other* story" (Εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις, ἕτερόν τοι ἐγὼ λόγον ἐκκορυφώσω, 106). In epic usage the adjective *heteros* can regularly have the full etymological meaning "the other of two," rather than simply "another," whether or not the demonstrative is present (cf. *Iliad* 4.502, 5.258). In this poem, *heteros* (21) without article clearly refers to one other in the context of pairs (see 23, 25–26). If this strong reading of *heteros* is followed, the emphasis of the Myth of Ages on the divine creation of each race becomes understandable: the point is not

¹⁸ On the deeply traditional theme of strife over a division, see Nagy 1999b, 127–39, 213–21, 314–16.

¹⁹ Note *Theogony* 548, Prometheus' address to Zeus as *kudiste megiste* and *Works and Days* 38, Perses *kudainôn basilêas*.

that the Gold, Silver, and other races came to be, but that Zeus or other gods produced them: the first two are made by immortals (110: ἄθάνατοι ποίησαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες, cf. 127), the second two specifically by Zeus (143, 158; perhaps also the last: 173d). Stressing this feature of the Ages would then allow us to make better sense of line 108, as we can now see that the story is meant to illustrate “how gods and mortals are born from the same source.” The usual force of the adverb is considerably watered down if we read, with West, “they started on the same terms.”²⁰ In this *heteros logos*, gods produce people; in the Prometheus story, the son of a Titan makes them as his private amusement. Although the latter story is nowhere on the surface here, the frequent reference to the involvement of humans in the myth (49, 51, 56, 82, 88, 90, 100) makes it sound as if they were the stakes being contested. Furthermore, Zeus’ design of Pandora from clay (60–61) would be most appropriate if she is meant to compete and consort with Promethean products of the same stuff. To sum up: this juxtaposition of stories, far from being random, can be read as a diptych about alternative models of creation. Nothing less than the Olympian order is brought into question thereby: whereas the Promethean creation is spoiled by a brother’s one failure of foresight, the attempts by Olympians multiply, degenerate, and end in entropy. If these two stories are united in an overall tale of competition between creator-craftsmen, we have yet another rendition attesting to the pervasiveness of strife.²¹ But we have moved one further step in the implicit argument of the composition: the eventual loser, Prometheus—like Perses, an addressee in this poem (54–58) but never a speaker—is nevertheless given his due; so shall Perses, it is suggested. We are not far from the *Prometheus Bound* and its somewhat blunter equal-time anti-Olympian script: Question Authority.

Metals, Birds, and Maidens

G. B. Conte, whose notion of the addressee as *prefigurazione di lettore* has influenced recent readings of Hesiod, among other ancient poets, also works with the idea that didactic as a genre is “open,” “*un contenitore aperto a svariate*

²⁰ West 1978, 178 notes that the word is used properly of blood-relationship; he has no parallels for the weaker meaning.

²¹ Typological analogues for such competitive creation can be found in Native American Coyote tales: see “In the beginning of the world” in Shipley 1991, 18–43.

possibilità.”²² Thus far, I have tried to show that the bewildering variety of material in the early portion of the *Works and Days* is united by the prominence given in each “myth” to differentiations of power between apparent equals—brothers, Strifes, creators. An inherent tension exists between, on one hand, the intentional surface variety, which gives an authentic sound of “talk” to this poetic monologue and, on the other, the practical message, constant in the *Works and Days*, that one should practice *dikê*. But the varied expressions are more than just an interesting cover for the unchanging precept. The “myths” proceed in fugue form, developing the theme while revealing new aspects of it. The addressee, this reader in the text, is educated by virtue of the effort he must make to follow the theme in its increasingly ornate and allusive mythopoeic forms. Most essential, the “doubles” that we have traced thus far serve to reinforce the instruction all along: this is not simply authoritative truth handed down, as in the generational transmission of wisdom; it is wisdom that invites debate, an “open” format that is stylized, in the *Works and Days*, as a continuing *neikos*.

In the open-ended nature of the composition’s form we can find a perfect match for the thematic concern with *dikê* that becomes so prominent in the Myth of the Ages. For dealing fairly, practicing justice, is, as Hesiod sees it, a habit, not an acquisition. Humans like Perses are always poised between *hubris* and *dikê*; the choice is open. By the same token, the Iron Age in which we live is, in fact, a future state, as the tenses of lines 177–96 emphasize repeatedly. The time-frame and events of this mythic passage make a close fit with the earlier myths of Strife and Pandora. The good Eris draws persons together in competitive effort, a feature iconically represented by the syntax and word order at lines 25–26:

καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων,
καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει καὶ ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῷ.

And potter is angry with potter, and builder with builder,
and beggar begrudges beggar, and poet poet.

But unbridled *hubris* in the Iron Age will split them apart as a negated example of the same figure highlights at 182–84:

οὐδὲ πατὴρ παίδεσσιν ὁμοίος οὐδέ τι παῖδες
οὐδὲ ξείνος ξεινοδόκῳ καὶ ἐταίρος ἐταίρῳ,
οὐδὲ κασίγνητος φίλος ἔσσεται, ὥς τὸ πάρος περ.

²² Conte 1991; for the influence of these notions, see Schiesaro et al. 1993 *passim*.

Father will not be like-minded with sons, nor sons at all,
 nor guest with host, nor comrade with comrade,
 nor will the brother be dear, as he once was.

The implication of the narrator's choice of tense must be that we can escape the nightmare future by preferring *dikê* in the present.²³ As we saw in the positioning of the *aoidos*—i.e., the speaker—in the Eris passage (26), here the role of brother—i.e., addressee—is saved for the key last mention. The future scenario is in one other way a rewrite of the Pandora myth's message: if a brother does right, this time, all might go right. If *dikê* is not done, however, the beneficial women who inhabit earth now, *Aidôs* and *Nemesis*, clothed in white, will then return to the gods, a precise reversal of the original descent from Olympus of the tricked-out, harmful female, Pandora.

As Vernant showed in his explication of the Myth of the Ages, the five-part temporal progression in the story represents a simpler collocation of *dikê* vs. *hubris*, which in turn is relevant to the larger thematic structure of the poem.²⁴ In this way, the seemingly digressive myth becomes completely relevant to the plea made to Perses. But we might go further, as we trace the appearances of didactic doubles, to consider the relevance of particular details within the first contrasting pair, the Gold and Silver Ages. J. S. Clay suggests that Perses may be meant to see himself mirrored in the *mega nêpios* of the Silver race (131).²⁵ Certainly, the use of the phrase to address him elsewhere (e.g., 633) points to this association. If we consider the context, the scene can also be read as a negative exemplum in relation to the outer frame of the *Works and Days*, a case of the implied failure of didactic. Not only do the Silver people fail to mature properly, staying home with mother for a century; when grown, they fail to sacrifice (135–36: *athanatous therapeuein; erdein*). Yet this is exactly what defines the human condition, as we learn from the *Theogony*; moreover, the instruction to sacrifice was apparently the primary lesson presented by a didactic composition attributed to Hesiod. The opening lines of this poem, the *Kheirônos Hypothêkai*, as preserved in the scholia to Pindar, tell the addressee (perhaps Achilles), “first, when you reach home, sacrifice [*erdein*] fine offerings to the immortal gods” (fr. 283.2–3 MW). In other words, an audience familiar with such traditional instructional verse (similar to verses in the *Works*

²³ Vernant 1981, 13–41.

²⁴ Vernant 1981, 13–41.

²⁵ J. S. Clay 1993, 27.

and *Days* itself: cf. 336) would see in the behavior of the hubristic Silver race a deviation from the model of properly matured heroic youth. If Perses is like the Silver men, it is because he is always in danger of ignoring instruction. The symmetry that we noted between the Strifes and the brothers is here repeated, inasmuch as the poet himself has, by contrast, something in common with the Golden Age: both are connected with agricultural abundance, Hesiod through his knowledge of farm lore, the Golden Age by its characteristic automatic profusion (lines 116–17).

We have seen that Perses as brother duplicates the poet's figure more closely than could an addressee from a younger generation. With the myth of the hawk and nightingale, we are reminded that Perses is himself one part of a dual audience, the other being the "kings" for whom Hesiod now makes his "coded" message, the *ainos*.²⁶ As the story is told here, the hawk has seized the smaller bird and tells it, when it cries, not to fight against the stronger, as its woes will only be increased. Clearly, the tale relates to the rapacity of the "bribe-devouring" kings (38–39) whom Hesiod called "fools" (*nēpioi*) for their inability to recognize that gain does not come so easily in the post-Promethean world (41–46). What we should notice here is the separation made between Perses and the kings, his would-be former allies. At the earlier mention (37–38), Perses is given equal if not greater blame, for having snatched additional goods in order to influence a legal decision. But now, it is the kings alone who are excoriated. When the short tale is over, Perses is addressed with positive encouragement, not blame (213):

ὦ Πέρση, σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης μὴδ' ὕβριν ὀφελλε·

As for you, Perses, give heed to Justice and do not foster
Outrageousness.

The subtle shift from the earlier passage marks another stage in the gradual rehabilitation of the brother: we are meant to notice that he does not require harsh words. Kings, on the other hand, have a different look to them, now that we have heard about the contest of Zeus and Prometheus in the meantime. Still, the moral of the bird fable can be taken to apply to both audiences, in slightly different ways, because it speaks of equalizing differences in power. In this fable, the powerful kings will be seen to lose, while the weaker bird wins.

²⁶ On semantics of the term and characteristics of the genre, see Nagy 1990, esp. 147–50, 309–15.

Given the allusive artistry of the *Works and Days*, which I have wanted to see as part of its function in educating listeners, we should not expect the text to offer an overt interpretation of the type “the hawk is the bad king, the nightingale is the singer”; furthermore, interpretation is not needed because meaning is already embedded in the culture, where myth provides enough association for what these birds represent. As with the Zinacantan poem with which this piece began, what is *not* said is equally if not more important than the explicit textual signals. Thus the *ainos* by itself, without an interpretive framework constructed by the poet, carries weight. Apart from the “message” however—that one should not be predatory like a hawk—the *ainos* has a higher rhetorical function in the composition of the *Works and Days* since it functions as a foil: Perses is *not* the kings, therefore not the hawk. He can hardly be the nightingale, either, but at least he can be associated with it, as we shall see shortly. This interpretation goes counter to that of West, who says Hesiod fails to make effective rhetorical use of the story. It worries West that the fault of the hawk is not expressed directly: “The hawk’s *hubris* matches the king’s without putting it in a ridiculous light or showing it to be ill-advised.”²⁷ But just as the Zinacantan poem runs counter to our culture’s ideas about hummingbirds, the Hesiodic *ainos* demands more than European “common-sense” analysis. Aerodynamically, nightingales are no match for hawks; mythically, they can best them every time, though only a Greek audience, attuned to the mythopoeic convention, might know this. In other words, we do not need to be told that the nightingale is the good bird, or will win this match. On the level of poetic diction, we have a good example of how local knowledge influences interpretation. West notes *ad loc.* that the adjective *poikilodeiron*, “dapple-necked,” is inappropriate for the bird in question and better suits the thrush. Good ornithology, but it ignores the far-reaching mythopoetic associations of *poikilos* in Greek. Chief among these is the connection between the “variegation” represented by *poikilos* and the realms of craft and song.²⁸ In view of the rich background of themes to which the word points, we know that the bird’s craft consists in the ability to change its song progressively; its endurance is marked by the ability to sing continuously; and its craftiness emerges from the combination of strength and changefulness. This is, in short, an Odyssean bird; it is not

²⁷ West 1978, 204.

²⁸ On the poetic themes associated with the nightingale and specifically with this adjective, see now the explication in Nagy 1996a, 30–65.

accidental that the epic hero is characterized as *poikilomêtês*, “with variegated cunning” (e.g., *Odyssey* 13.293).

Two more reasons that an audience would read this story as a victory of nightingale over hawk, even though this is never stated, become clear from the text. First, we can read this tale as being about communication. Here it is worthwhile noting a purely linguistic point, the force of *su d'* at line 213. This rare emphatic use makes the personal pronoun in the nominative a contrastive. What the hawk did *not* do is listen. *You*, Perses, should. The hawk does not understand because he and his victim speak different ways: she mourns pitifully (*eleon ... mureto* 205–6), which he misinterprets as “you screeched,” *lelêkas*.²⁹ In effect, the hawk cannot “hear” the nightingale; for the space of the story, the text uses the hawk as focalizer of the action, as we get his view. What he hears, the voice of the nightingale, is never enunciated and gets interpreted by him as something that we know it is not, because he cannot comprehend, knowing as he does only fear and not pity. His rational argument, masked as persuasion—“it’s madness to fight against the stronger”—is just as irrational as the nightingale’s lament. But lament in the realm of Greek poetry has the advantage of being a powerful shaper of individual reputation and is thus placed in the mouths of the Muses themselves (e.g., *Odyssey* 24.60–62, Achilles’ funeral).

Second, as Puelma and others have pointed out, it matters that the bird is specifically called a singer (208), for this key word unites it with the poet performing the poem.³⁰ I would add that in the pragmatics of oral performance—the performance context that this poem at least mimics, whatever the circumstances of its composition—the singer standing before an audience has unmistakable authority and power. He or she can curtail or expand performance, telling the story this way, now, whatever other versions an audience may have heard. The audience, for the duration of performance, is in the grip of the *aoidos*, as the descriptions of poetic performance in Homer tell us time and again. In purest form, song is overpowering desire, a Siren enchantment.³¹ In sum, Hesiod *qua aoidos* does not need to make an overt assertion of his or the nightingale’s power: the hawk has already lost, no matter what the fate of the nightingale—because the singer clearly survives in front of us, a sign that “nightingales” and what they say must be right.

²⁹ A sound better suited to hawks: West 1978 ad loc. cites *Iliad* 22.141.

³⁰ Puelma 1972; also, Nagy 1990, 256 and 1992, 66–67.

³¹ This in turn is characterized in images suitable for bird-song: see, e.g., the iconographic tradition of bird-Sirens, on which Neils 1995.

Ultimately, Hesiod's refusal to make an explicit condemnation of the hawk's *hubris* can be read as a magisterial dismissal of hawk and kings, a *damnatio*, from the standpoint of the more clever nightingale/singer.³²

There is yet more to be found in the deployment of this artful *ainos* that can bring us closer to the distinctiveness of this poem. The detail just mentioned, that the hawk does not listen, is meant, as I said, to sway Perses. Behind this lies the threat of praise and blame, the traditional power of the poet: the *aoidos* will always be around to settle your reputation in the future, no matter what you do to him now. But the Hesiodic strategy is more subtle here, even as it depends on this authority to destroy the authorities. For Hesiod does not now say "listen to *me*" but "listen to *dikê*." It might seem like a sudden jolt to move from the bird's lamenting voice in the *ainos* to some previously unheard and abstract *Dikê*, but the poem makes the metaphorical shift easier for us. *Dikê* is a victimized woman, as we begin to hear at lines 220 ff., and there is a "clamor" (ῥόθος) when she is manhandled. The syntactical parallelism of 208/220 clarifies the bird/woman parallel:

τῇ δ' εἷς ἧ σ' ἄν ἐγὼ περ ἄγω καὶ αἰοιδὸν εὐῶσαν 208

You are going wherever I shall carry you, even if you
are a singer

τῆς δὲ Δίκης ῥόθος ἐλκομένης ἧ κ' ἄνδρες ἄγωσι 220

there is a clamor when Justice is dragged where men
carry her off [trans. Most 2006]

To summarize at this point: Hesiod has first used the *ainos* as a foil to separate one audience (Perses) from another (the kings) and encourage his primary addressee by means of the blame he attaches to the secondary group. Then, through the association of nightingale and *Dikê*, he turns his primary addressee into a listener with two functions. On one hand, the command "listen to *Dikê*" means "pay attention to this composition." As we have seen, the method of the poem has been to involve Perses in the message from the start, plunging him into a *neikos*. This equation of the poet's talk with the voice of *Dikê* is made emphatic shortly after the description of the social and natural effects of *dikê* and *hubris* (lines 225–47). For we learn (lines 256–60) that *Dikê* is not only a woman, but a *parthenos*, daughter of Zeus, who reports to him about human injustice. Furthermore, the verb used to

³² On this technique in Homeric exchanges, see Martin 1989, 142–43.

describe her speech (γηρούετ') is the same that characterizes the speech of the Muses themselves at *Theogony* 28 (ἀληθέα γηρούσασθαι).³³ On the other hand, now "listen to *Dikē*" has an even more urgent sense, which we can paraphrase: "hear the cry of a woman [*Dikē*] being raped and do something about it." How can Perses fail to respond? By doubling his role (poet/*Dikē*) and that of Perses (listener/rescuer), Hesiod empowers his brother, crediting him with the potential to become a heroic figure of just dealing, like the good king whose land flourishes. More than this, by imagining his addressee as the person who listens to *Dikē*, Hesiod places him on a level with the king of the gods. For it is Zeus who ultimately hears out the complaints of his daughter.

With this elevation, we come full circle to the proem, which I have delayed discussing until now. Again, a marked contrastive provides an entrance into the technique of doubling. Hesiod's hymnic praise of Zeus has concluded with the mention of the god's power to straighten what is crooked and wither the arrogant. Then, in a shift to the imperative, this "constative" description becomes "directive," as Hesiod tells Zeus to fulfill the role he has just outlined (9–10):

κλῦθι ἰδὼν αἰὼν τε, δίκῃ δ' ἴθυνε θέμιστας
 τύνη ἐγὼ δέ κε Πέρσῃ ἐτήτυμα μυθησαίμην.

Heed, when you have seen and heard, by justice keep straight the
 ordinances,

You, for your part. But *I* would like to tell Perses the truth.

If Perses, in the sequence that I have outlined, is gradually brought to the point where he can become like Zeus, it is only, at last, to become like his brother, who has already asserted from the start an authority on the level of the supreme arbiter.³⁴

You, Too

It is easier to be like a brother than like a father. One already is, genetically. Nothing should come closer, not even a *hetairos*, as Hesiod will say (*Works and Days* 707–12):

³³ Compare Hesiod's intent in *Works and Days* 10: ἐγὼ δέ κε Πέρσῃ ἐτήτυμα μυθησαίμην.

³⁴ On the assertion of authority in this proem, see Nagy 1990, 256–58.

μηδὲ κασιγνήτῳ ἴσον ποιεῖσθαι ἐταῖρον
 εἰ δέ κε ποιήσῃ, μή μιν πρότερος κακὸν ἔρξεις,
 μηδὲ ψεύδεσθαι γλώσσης χάριν· εἰ δέ σέ γ' ἄρχῃ
 ἢ τι ἔπος εἰπὼν ἀποθύμιον ἦε καὶ ἔρξας,
 δις τόσα τείνυσθαι μεμνημένος· εἰ δέ κεν αὖτις
 ἡγήτ' ἐς φιλότητα, δίκην δ' ἐθέλῃσι παρασχεῖν,
 δέξασθαι·

Do not treat a comrade in the same way as your brother; but if you do, then do not harm him first, nor give him a lying grace with your tongue; but if he begins, telling you some word contrary to your spirit or even doing some such thing, then be mindful to pay him back twice as much. But if he is led once again towards friendship and decides to offer requital, accept it ...

“We are no longer conscious of Perses as the recipient of this advice,” notes West in his commentary (p. 330). But why not? This brotherly wisdom, impersonally given, is an effective marker of the hard-won assent of the addressee to become a listener who can now deal with the “true things” on a level of abstraction, removed from the distorted world of the *neikos* in which he had been trapped previously. And it is a sign of Hesiod’s confidence in the conversion that he can risk telling Perses to take double the vengeance on a brother-like friend who says or does anything wrong. Finally, it is a further pledge that this fraternal supporter of *dikê* will not, in fact, act wrongly, for, in the terms set up, to do so would be to curse himself with instant and two-fold retribution.

I have argued that the choice of the brother-figure enables the poet to approach as an equal, and persuade, his addressee in a way that the more familiar guise of tutor or father-figure prevents. We see the poet’s persuasion as it succeeds within the poem because by line 298 it is obvious that he is able to move on to the specific precepts telling Perses *how* to work, instead of dwelling on the *need* to work rather than bribe kings or grab goods.³⁵ The break is signaled by a three-part coda that once more works as a pair of foils (lines 293–97):

οὗτος μὲν πανάριστος, ὃς αὐτῷ πάντα νοήσει,
 φρσασάμενος τὰ κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἐς τέλος ἦσιν ἀμείνω
 ἐσθλὸς δ' αὖ καὶ κείνος, ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πίθηται·

³⁵ J. S. Clay 1993, 32–33 is less optimistic about the representation of a successful learning experience on the part of Perses.

ὅς δέ κε μήτ' αὐτὸς νοέη μήτ' ἄλλου ἀκούων
ἐν θυμῷ βάλληται, ὁ δ' αὖτ' ἀχρεῖος ἀνὴρ.

The man who thinks of everything by himself, considering what will be better, later and in the end—this man is the best of all. That man is fine too, the one who is persuaded by someone who speaks well. But whoever neither thinks by himself nor pays heed to what someone else says and lays it to his heart—that man is good for nothing.

Of the three characters—the man who thinks independently vs. one who obeys a good speaker vs. one who does neither—Perses can now be assumed to have chosen the middle role, encouraged by the ideal of the first and dissuaded by the last.

To this rhetorical strategy that works on its object by saying “you, too, can be like me,” two further aspects of the *Works and Days* must be compared in conclusion. Both emerge most clearly in the passage on sailing. First, the seemingly ironic tone. After detailing the proper storage of gear and seasonable time for sailing (618–32), Hesiod reminds Perses that their father took to the sea for want of sufficient livelihood and left Aeolian Cyme, “not fleeing wealth nor riches and happiness” (637)—a wry understatement—only to land up in Ascrea, “bad in winter, wretched in summer, and never good” (640). More ironic is the admission, after promising to tell of “the *metra* of the sea,” that Hesiod himself is “not a bit sophisticated when it comes to sailing and boats” (649: οὔτε τι ναυτιλῆς σεσοφισμένος οὔτε τι νηῶν). His only sea experience came from crossing the 65-meter channel over to Euboea. One could interpret these as testimonia to the power of inspiration, as Hesiod seems to indicate that we should at 661–62: despite his limited knowledge, the Muses’ teaching allows him to tell the mind of Zeus. At the same time, there is some humor to the scenario of Perses’ being invited to learn sailing from such a self-confessed landlubber. Whichever way we read these lines, their effect depends on the *captatio* principle that has characterized the creation of personae all along in this poem. If the adviser is to be trusted, it is because he, too, has been there, at the low level of his advisee; starting from nothing, he can now tell all.

From a careful study of diction in this and related passages, Ralph Rosen has argued that the sailing episode is nothing less than “an *ainigma* that compares the poetics of *Works and Days* to the poetics of the Homeric epic.”³⁶ In Rosen’s reading, the comparison situates the poetic medium of

³⁶ Rosen 1990, quote on p. 113; see also Nagy 1992, 78–79.

Hesiod at a level below the Homeric, but the right level. Hesiod, in this version, acknowledges that epic poetry can be dangerous, like spring sailing. It is better to be “seasonable” when launching onto the poetic sea. Hesiod, as he represents his craft, has had some success (witness his victory in the funeral games of Amphidamas) in his own small venture.

The strategy that I have been tracing—the self-deprecating, equalizing stance towards a “brother”—may, however, help us read the metapoetic reference of the sailing passage in a somewhat different manner. Note that Hesiod does not directly deprecate the contest itself, only the size of his sea voyage in getting to the games, which is in explicit contrast to the epic voyage of the Achaeans from Aulis (lines 651–53). Nor does he identify the other contestants for the tripod that he brought back to Helicon. But another tradition, which is attested in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, makes it clear that the meeting at Chalcis is a showdown between the exponents of epic and didactic.³⁷ We have seen already, in the *ainos* of the hawk and nightingale, that certain facts do not require mention in an attuned audience and that *refusal* to mention someone, in this medium, can be a powerful strategy for showing one’s superior power. In other words, we need not read Hesiod’s “autobiography” here as part of a humble concession that his poetry is second to the ambitious scope of epic. The *Certamen* shows us a performer who is every bit as good as Homer at extemporizing and capping lines. Interestingly, it is the content of Hesiod’s song, rather than his versifying, that wins him the tripod, as the judge, King Paneides, decides to make the award to one who sang of peaceful agriculture rather than wars and slaughters (*Certamen* p. 233 Allen). If this thematic division, war vs. peace, has any claim to antiquity (and the design of the shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18 would suggest so), we are left with two related prospects. First, there is the possibility that the “myth” of Hesiod and his brother Perses, the structural and rhetorical principle for the first part of the *Works and Days*, may itself be a reflection of the traditions of rhapsodic competition that we find stylized in such representations as that in the *Certamen*.³⁸ It is noteworthy that the *Certamen* story is explicitly opposed to other configurations of literary history in which Homer was said to be younger or older than Hesiod (*Certamen* pp. 226–27 Allen). If either were true, then one poet would inevitably have to be considered the pupil

³⁷ The composition is Hadrianic, but has an excellent claim to contain material from at least the sixth century BCE: see Richardson 1981 and Chapter 7 above.

³⁸ There may be a similar inscribing of performance traditions into the narrative of the *Iliad* in the mention of Thamyris in *Iliad* 2.594ff., as argued at Martin 1989, 229–30.

or imitator of the other, a relation congruent with the more familiar picture of didactic transmission. If the *Works and Days* was itself composed or at least re-performed in rhapsodic competitions (as appears from Plato's *Ion* 531–32), it would have been all the more powerful if presented as a direct address to a “Perses” who represented not only a “brother” and a general audience in need of instruction, but also the “other” major mode of hexameter performance.

This brings us to a concluding suggestion, again based on the realities of rhapsodic performance. Imagine the live presentation of character that rhapsodes like *Ion*, certainly (and I suspect composers like “Homer,” probably) practiced. Whoever performed the *Odyssey* in something like the form that it now has must, for the space of four books, “become” the *persona* of Odysseus, the hero who sacked Troy ... Τροίης ἰερὸν πολίεθρον ἔπερσε. Perses, “Wrecker,” would be an appropriate nickname for this character; *ptoliporthos* was a generic epithet for Iliadic heroes as well as for Odysseus.³⁹ Indeed, the entire genre of epic about Troy's fall may be represented metonymically as a tradition about a “sack” (cf. *Iliou Persis*). The beauty of this didactic strategy of creating the brother-as-other is that, in the end, anyone can be adopted by Hesiod—perhaps even his epic-rhapsodic *semblable*.

³⁹ Nagy 1992, 74–75 takes the connection to the destruction of cities in terms relevant to the internal themes of the *Works and Days*, in particular the destructive power of *hubris* in the *polis*. I regard our readings as complementary.

HESIOD'S METANASTIC POETICS¹

The received wisdom about Hesiod's poetics is simple: he is no Homer. His poetry is supposedly rough, awkward, unsophisticated, repetitive, disjointed, a second-best versifier's striving after effect.² Too often the rhetoric even of those who respect Hesiodic poetry damns it with faint praise. Readers of the second edition of the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*—to take just one easily available reference that students might consult—learn that Hesiod's "didactic epics" were meant for "the peasant of Boeotia rather than the Ionian aristocrat, being concerned with the morality and beliefs of the small farmer toughly confronting a life of ceaseless labor and few rewards. While they cannot be compared to Homer's works in scope or genius, they often display much poetic power."³

It is worth pausing over such influential criticism because essential concerns of poetics are recognized, if only superficially, therein. First, the problematic notion of "genius." What does it mean to identify any poet in this way? And does it make sense at all in the case of Homer, about whom we know nothing, and whose poetic predecessors have left only names? Let us admit that calling Homer a "genius" is, at the least harmful level, merely literary-critical shorthand, and at its least helpful, a dangerous retrojection

¹ Originally published in *Ramus* 21, no. 1 (1992): 11–33.

² Lamberton 1988b, 144 has a choice selection of such judgments from Kirk and West, which he rightly dismisses. Unfortunately, Solmsen, who edited the widely used Oxford Classical Text (1983), was highly susceptible to such opinions. He questions the authenticity of *Theogony* 775–806, for example, because the passage has to his ear "a smooth elegance quite alien to the genuine Hesiod": see Solmsen 1982, 16.

³ Trypanis 1974, 326. The revised article on "Greek Poetry" in the most recent edition of this reference work (Greene et al. 2012, 578) reprints, in lieu of Trypanis' paragraphs on Hesiod, the third edition's (1993, 483) only slightly less condescending words by C. J. Herington: "The Hesiodic works show nothing of the architectonic skill of Homer or of his genius for realizing character through speech. They are essentially episodic codifications of ancient lore."

of Romantic ideology.⁴ Such language reifies and personalizes certain qualities one associates with the poetry transmitted under Homer's name. Furthermore, the qualities are usually identified impressionistically (a mode of criticism hallowed by Matthew Arnold's essay *On Translating Homer* and practiced by most English critics since).⁵ But how do we explain or quantify the "nobility," "plainness," and "rapidity" that Arnold found? Traditional aesthetic appreciation of Homer simply refused, since it was built into Romantic notions that "genius" productions are by definition unanalyzable.

We might next notice how "genius" and "scope" are coordinated in the traditional criticism of Hesiod—which, since antiquity, has always been a by-product of the vexed critical reception of *Homer*. If Homer is somehow "best" because his epics try to enshrine heroic exploits within heroically long poems and to make heroic careers the expression of cosmic struggles, then *of course* Hesiod will never attain Homeric "scope." What is missing in such traditional criticism is a sense of genre. Hesiodic poetry is *not* Homeric epic, or even "epic" at all (a word derived from post-archaic systematizing).⁶

When one says Hesiod composed for peasants, at least it is acknowledged that ancient as well as modern poetry had audiences. Of course, this acknowledgement is employed most often to explain or excuse the poetry's allegedly infelicitous style. But notice the slippage between mention of this imagined ancient audience and talk of "poetic power." Power to affect whom? Us, surely, not Boeotian peasants; which is to say a long line of audiences *like* us, back to antiquity, since we would presumably not even possess any Hesiodic verse were it not transmitted by those who valued it. Yet from what we know about ancient scholarship, such transmission depended on learned poet-critics who resembled Ionian aristocrats much more than Boeotian peasants. What we do know is that these same Alexandrians experimented with the peasant *persona*. If we had no more of Theocritean poetry than the pastoral idylls, no real biographical traditions about the poet, and no Vergil to imitate him, I suspect at least a few modern critiques would denigrate Theocritus' Coan inelegance.

⁴ H. Clarke 1981 traces the intricate interplay between such Homer criticism and wider literary critical trends.

⁵ As Warren Anderson points out (1965, 82–86), Arnold's impressions were based on a number of inaccuracies. Goodheart 1984, 3–4 shows how New Criticism continued to stress an Arnoldian reliance on literary "judgment," resulting in an "antitheoretical animus" that "persists in certain English critics who can't resist a sneer every time they utter the word 'theory'."

⁶ For attempts at definition, see Chapter 1 above.

So, either there was a clean cultural break within antiquity, making it possible for sophisticated audiences suddenly to appreciate “rough” Hesiodic poetry (like the Romantic discovery of “Ossian” perhaps?); or the original audience for Hesiodic poetry should no longer be so naively imagined. We have to begin a study of Hesiodic poetics starting with these largest questions, sorting out the several possible “audiences” for Hesiod and following up the leads given by those who have stressed that “Hesiod” himself is largely a traditional *persona*. I believe this will gain us a sense of the distinctiveness and value of Hesiodic poetics.

First, we might point to the audience that the poetry, in the form we have it, *represents* as listening to the performance. In the *Works and Days*, the “kings” and Hesiod’s brother Perses have been taken as this audience, because they are directly addressed, but already the picture is more complicated: the voice that gives us the poem is not directly described as a *poetic* voice at all, if we understand the proem to set the pragmatic terms, the audience-listener relations, for the composition (*Works and Days* 1–2):⁷

Muses of Pieria, who spread fame by songs [ᾠοιδῆσι κλείουσai],
come here, narrate in detail about [ἐννέπετε] Zeus, making a
hymnos about your father [ὑμνεῖουσai] ...

The marked term *ennepete*, as we see from more extensive use in Homeric diction, applies to a speech-act in which one *narrates* something at length and in detail. This important verb is systematically coordinated with another marked term, *mûthos*, “authoritative speech-act,” as in the Homeric formula *ennepe mûthon*, which describes how Iris transmitted a warning from Zeus to Hera and Athena (*Iliad* 8.412).⁸ Given this precise usage, there is no reason to take the verb at *Works and Days* 2 as a simple synonym for “sing” (*aeidein*), although this activity also is attributed to the Muses in the previous line.⁹ The emphasis of *ennepete* is different, more specific; it calls attention to the content, the length, and the authority of a performance. This is to say that the “audience” of the *Works and Days* is, in the first place, all those who hear the Muses’ praise of Zeus, including Hesiod and an implied general audience, which may or may not include Perses and the “kings” about whom

⁷ I shall address in my conclusion the implications of the relative dating of this proem, which Robert Lamberton 1988a has recently argued is late.

⁸ For the semantics of *ennepe*, see Martin 1989, 238; for *mûthos*, Martin 1989, 1–42. Other forms of this formula describe commands of Zeus (*Iliad* 11.186) and Nestor (*Iliad* 11.839).

⁹ Nagy 1990, 21 makes the same point, contra West, with reference to debate on the development of actual epic performance.

we learn later. Moreover, the audience is not hearing a song so much as a narrative.

Compare the way in which the mutual *story-telling* enjoyed by Nestor and Machaon is described in the *Iliad* (11.642–43):

When those two, drinking, put off the parching thirst,
with *mûthoi* they found pleasure narrating [*enepontes*] to one
another.¹⁰

Finally, the narrative tells us first about a chief god who himself authorizes the Muses' celebratory singing, their ability to give fame-through-poetry (*kleos*), for it is Zeus who makes mortals famous or obscure (*Works and Days* 3–4). At this point in the proem, Zeus becomes the second "audience" of the poem (9–10):

κλυῖθι ἰδὼν αἰὼν τε, δίκη δ' ἴθυνε θέμιστας
τύννη ἐγὼ δέ κε Πέρσῃ ἐτήτυμα μυθησαίμην.

Listen, seeing and hearing, by justice make straight the judgements,
you. But *I* would like to make a *mûthos* [*mûthêsaimên*] of true things
for Perses.

The first few lines, then, of the poem that has been read repeatedly as straightforward Hesiodic autobiography offer a far from simple picture of the poet's audience or function. Hesiod commands the Muses (in contrast with their tart instructions *to him* in the *Theogony* proem, lines 23–35). At the same time, the poet associates Zeus with poetry but distances himself from it, since, as *mûthos*, his composition introduces itself not as musical speech but as authoritative talk, or more exactly, instruction. Now it is worth pointing out that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* can be similarly contrasted, the former beginning "Sing [*aeide*] goddesses, of the wrath," the latter "Narrate [*ennepe*], Muse, about the man" In this regard, it is interesting that of the two Homeric poems it is the *Odyssey* that contains many close parallels to instructional verses found in Hesiod.¹¹ We should pay attention to such proemial lexical distinctions because they are our only internal clues to

¹⁰ See Martin 1989, 39, where I use the same translation of *mûthoi*. One of the several erroneous claims by Arieti in a review (1992, 87–90) is that I identified *mûthoi* as "set speeches" instead of stories in this scene.

¹¹ E.g., *Odyssey* 17.347 = *Works and Days* 317; also, the phraseology shared by *Odyssey* 8.170–73 and *Theogony* 88–92, on which see Chapter 12 below; and cf. other examples cited by Edwards 1971, 166–89 and Cantarella 1931, 12–13.

genre-patterning, with no independent ancient testimony obliging us to read all hexameter as “epic” or “song.”

Once we thus place at either extreme of the spectrum of Greek hexameter poetry Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Homer's *Iliad*, and contrast their poetics, other differences emerge. (Note that this is *not* to claim priority for one genre or text, or explicit cross-references on the part of either genre.) Most striking is the way in which Hesiodic poetry assumes the stance of an outsider who happens to be allowed inside, exposing the narrator as one who has learned intimately the language of the group but still speaks with the viewpoint of one whose special experiences, emerging from a certain solitude and isolation, locate him on the margin of the community. Paradoxically, from this point he has a clearer view of the center. Thus, the figure of Hesiod embodies the most authoritative source (as in the *Theogony*) but also critic (as in the *Works and Days*) whom one could imagine. I shall argue that this status as “exterior insider,” which we see dramatized in the poetry of the *Works and Days* especially, made it possible for ancient traditions, already operative in the *Works and Days*, to represent Hesiod as a *metanastês*, one who has moved into a new community. Herodotus and others would later use the figure of Anacharsis the Scythian “sage” who visited Greece, for the same effect.¹² “Metanastic” poetics is the voice of the immigrant; but it is also the technique of the mystic who returns, as a stranger in his own land, to tell about what he knows. In what follows, I shall concentrate on the poetics of the *Works and Days*, showing how the “metanastic” stance helps us to understand such smaller-scale features as the poem's rhetorical structures, sub-genres, and even diction and dialect variations. Once the poetics of this most distinctive Hesiodic composition are sketched, we can compare the results with the poetics of the *Theogony*.¹³

This century's rediscovery of a rich ancient Near Eastern literature in Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and several other languages has made it easier to identify the genre of the *Works and Days* as a “wisdom” composition. Yet, as one can discern in Martin West's helpful (though incomplete) survey of such literature, the form of wisdom compositions varies so widely that assignment to the genre by no means settles all the questions regarding

¹² On the usefulness of Anacharsis, see Hartog 1988, 64–82 and Kindstrand 1981.

¹³ To extend the argument to the *Scutum* would require a demonstration that the poem is as much “Hesiod's” as the *Works and Days* and *Theogony*, an assertion I am not prepared to make: see further Chapter 13 below.

the poetics of a given work.¹⁴ The most obvious gain for interpreting the *Works and Days* is oddly enough, an advance that many Hellenists, including West, still adamantly resist: that we should consider the poem's narrator and addressee to be entirely fictional conventions inextricable from the genre. The positivist historicism that refuses to acknowledge the *persona* in Hesiod feeds on the old genius/peasant dichotomy that I mentioned above.¹⁵ It also relies on misuse of comparative typology: West follows Nicolai and others in asserting that, because the *Works and Days* narrator addresses his brother, rather than a son or prince (the usual generic addressees), Perses must be a "real" person.¹⁶ This conclusion further props up several exercises of faulty logic. One favorite argument is along the lines of West's comment that "it would be exceptional for a pretend person to be addressed by one who is just what he seems to be, namely Hesiod—and no one supposes Hesiod himself to be an assumed character."¹⁷ So Perses, on this account, is not a *persona* because brothers are not conventional in the genre and Hesiod is not a *persona* because Perses isn't. Another version comes from Bernard Knox, who thinks "no one has gone so far as to doubt the existence" of Hesiod's father "and it seems unlikely that Hesiod would add a fake brother to a real father." Yet another twist is Peter Green's assertion that "no one supposes that Hesiod invented himself; and since his personal relationships stand at the heart of the *Works and Days*, it is hard to believe, from the circumstantial evidence he offers, that he has saddled himself with a fictitious father and brother for the occasion."¹⁸

¹⁴ West 1978, 3–22. I miss in his listing any compositions from the Americas and East Asia. In what follows, if I should seem to confront most often West's positions, it is because he is usually a learned and recent formulator of any Hesiodic problem. As an example of complications suggested by comparative material, note West 1978, 7 on genre-crossing within hymnic and admonitory compositions.

¹⁵ This is linked to the Idealist strain in modern German classical criticism and thus again ultimately to Romantic views: see Griffith's excellent analysis, 1983, 37–41.

¹⁶ West 1978, 34; yet even West 1978, 15 cites *Mahabharata* 3.148–49 without claiming that Hanumat or his brother, whom he there advises, is "real." Signs of the usual father-figure/"son" dramatic frame are evident in the *Works and Days*' use of *nēpios*-addresses: see Pellizer 1972, 38–42. Griffith 1983, 55–57 treats the brother-motif as a subtle innovation in the traditional dramatic framing of wisdom works.

¹⁷ West 1978, 34.

¹⁸ Green 1984, 22; Knox 1989, 7. Stein 1990, 26 uses the "real" father argument to claim that Perses is real, then on p. 44 claims that if Perses is a *persona*, the father has to be real because Hesiod (who is not a *persona*) would not have doubled *personae* by making the father one. Similar logic bedevils Zanker 1986, 26–36, who argues (p. 26 n. 4) that Hesiod relies on the Muses for instruction

Rather than play this desperate game to defend a “real” Hesiod, a few modern critics have returned to explore the possibilities of interpretation arising from reading Hesiod and his kin as *personae*, a suggestion as old as Friedrich Welcker’s 1826 edition of Theognis. Certainly the evidence of the Theognidean corpus, along with what we know of no longer extant “advice” (*hupothêkai*) compositions, which put wisdom in the mouths of Cheiron the Centaur, Nestor, or ancient sages, points toward fictional dramatization in this genre *within Greek*, just as in the Near Eastern works.¹⁹ Gregory Nagy’s further demonstration that the very name Hesiod means “one who emits the voice,” (1982b) leads one to see the poet as a generic figure who embodies the singing power of the Muses. Once we are allowed to compare Hesiod and Hesiodic dramatization not with other “authors,” but with other traditional characters and situations within Greek literature, avenues of approach open up to rich thematic parallels, such as the presentation of the “beggar” Odysseus in his quarrel (*eris*) with Eurymachus at *Odyssey* 18.366–75.²⁰ The story of how Hesiod’s father left Cyme in Asia Minor and settled in Boeotia can be reinterpreted in terms of its appropriateness to the themes of wealth, outrage (*hubris*), and justice (*dikê*), which lie at the heart of the *Works and Days*.²¹ The advice on seafaring given by Hesiod at *Works and Days* 618–94 can be read as a highly artful, even enigmatic expression of one genre’s self-presentation vis-à-vis Homeric epic.²² The prominence of the “Hymn to Hecate” (*Theogony* 411–49) need no longer be attributed to some personal cult of a historical Hesiod’s family; its function, as poetry that highlights and completes the praise of Zeus’s reign, can now emerge.²³

In short, abandoning the positivists’ search for the “real” Hesiod is crucial if we are to put poetics first. Then we might appreciate Hesiod as “a mask for many anonymous voices, all trained, and trained well, over generations to sound the same, to speak with the same identity, and to pass on the same traditions,” and we might explore further the way in which the

in navigating (his only experience in sailing being the 65-metre crossing from Aulis to Euboea), but does not talk of the Muses’ help for farming-instructions, therefore must have been a farmer.

¹⁹ West 1978, 24–25 has a list, now expanded and interpreted by Kurke 1990.

²⁰ Nagy 1992, 37–82, esp. 47–41, 70–71.

²¹ Nagy 1992, 72–76. Griffith 1983, 61–62 notes the father’s function as a negative paradigm, thus an innovation vs. the usual father-function in the wisdom genre.

²² As Rosen 1990, 99–113 has shown.

²³ See Griffith 1983, 53–55.

“autobiographical” remarks of the poet “always serve a specific and necessary function within the contexts in which they occur.”²⁴

Actually, we do not have to go beyond early Greek poetry to find analogies to the sort of wisdom composition represented by the *Works and Days*. A number of critics have found in the long speech of Phoenix to Achilles in the *Iliad* (9.434–603) a close parallel to the mixture of direct personal address, exhortations to listen to wisdom, and persuasive rhetoric one sees in Hesiod.²⁵ Phoenix, like Hesiod, narrates elaborate mythical exempla (Meleager: *Iliad* 9.524–99; compare *Works and Days* stories of Prometheus, Pandora, and the Five Ages). He vividly represents the wrinkled, lame Prayers (*Litai*) and swift-footed Destruction (*Atê*) in allegories that recall the mistreated Justice (*Dikê*) at *Works and Days* 220–24 and 256–63, as well as personifications of Destruction, Hunger, Shame, and Retribution, among others (cf. *Works and Days* 200–37 generally). And he prefaces his speech with a personal story, the quarrel he had with his father over a mistress, which drove him to flee his country.²⁶ It is this last feature that I wish to concentrate on, for I believe it helps us find a tighter link between Hesiodic poetics and the Hesiodic persona than has been recognized previously.

Let us grant that the general function of such autobiographical recollections, in both the speech of Phoenix and the *Works and Days*, parallels that of the *hypomnêsis* in Greek and Latin prayer-style as “a reminder of a special connection between speaker and addressee.”²⁷ If his rhetoric contains such striking resemblances to Hesiod’s, what should we make of the specific details of Phoenix’s career? The point of his story is to reaffirm the close affection he has with Achilles. Thus, he positions himself in lines 438–41 as a father-figure, recalling that he was sent by Peleus to watch over Achilles because the young hero is *nêpios* “ignorant” and untried in war and speaking-assemblies (*agoreôn*). At this point we can notice two parallels already to Hesiod. The poet of the *Works and Days* brings up an “autobiographical”

²⁴ The first of these elegant formulations is by Lamberton 1988, 35, the second by Griffith 1983, 38.

²⁵ Jaeger 1945, 66 notes in passing that the *Works and Days* is a “huge admonitory speech” and thus uses myths as Homeric speeches do; I do not agree, however, with Jaeger’s view that Hesiod borrows the technique from Homer, since it is more likely a genre of discourse used independently by both composers: see the model given in Martin 1984a. The assumption of borrowing detracts from the careful analysis of the passages by Schmidt 1986, who discusses the earlier studies by Diller and Munding.

²⁶ André Lardinois points out (personal communication) that this story also is paradigmatic and mirrors the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon over Briseis, contra Schmidt 1986, 96–124.

²⁷ Griffith 1983, 56.

reminiscence about a father both he and his addressee knew. Speaking of the need to wait for the right sailing season, he recalls (*Works and Days* 633–34):

ὥς περ ἐμός τε πατήρ καὶ σός, μέγα νήπιε Πέρση,
πλωίζεσκ' ἐν νηυσί, βίου κεχρημένος ἐσθλοῦ·

Thus my father and yours, very ignorant [*nêpie*] Perses,
used to sail in ships, lacking a noble livelihood.

Moreover, the addressee is described as “ignorant” (*nêpios*), although in the *Iliad* scene the description fits a former stage of Achilles’ life, whereas Perses is even now in need of instruction about proper behavior.

Phoenix does not call to mind only Achilles’ father. As the exhortation continues, he shifts to the recollection of his own father, Amyntor, who once cursed him with infertility because, at the urging of his aggrieved mother, Phoenix slept with the older man’s mistress (*Iliad* 9.448–61). Having broken out from his father’s guarded house, Phoenix made his way to Phthia and Peleus, he recalls. Significantly, Achilles’ father “received me eagerly and loved me as a father loves his son, his only son [*mounon*], last-born, to many possessions.” With this detail, we might compare the ideal household envisioned by Hesiod’s precept (*Works and Days* 376–77):

μουνογενῆς δὲ πάις εἴη πατρῷον οἶκον
φερβέμεν ὥς γὰρ πλοῦτος ἀέξεται ἐν μεγάροισιν·

May there be an only-born son to care for the paternal home.
That way wealth grows in the halls.

Within the *Works and Days*, of course, this ideal of preserving familial property makes sense in the speech of one who has had a bitter dispute about patrimony with his brother. If we read the Phoenix story with this in mind, it appears that the old advisor experienced the situation that the Hesiodic viewpoint can only wistfully recommend. Or, put another way, Phoenix describes his personal biography in rhetoric that uses the themes of a *Works and Days* desideratum.²⁸ Furthermore, in his flight into a new country, Phoenix finds the wealth that Hesiod’s father failed to get. “He [Peleus] made me rich

²⁸ Nagy 1992, 76–77 connects the *mounogenes* theme with the figure of Hecate in the *Theogony* (only-born daughter of another “Perses”) and the story of the two Erides. It is clear that the theme was important enough to create a nexus of mythical representations, which makes it more likely that an audience would appreciate its appearance in the Phoenix story.

[*aphneion*] and gave me a great troop,” he says (9.483). Contrast *Works and Days* 635–40:

ὅς ποτε καὶ τῇδ' ἦλθε πολὺν διὰ πόντον ἀνύσσας,
 Κύμην Αἰολίδα προλιπὼν ἐν νηὶ μελαίνῃ,
 οὐκ ἄφενος φεύγων οὐδὲ πλοῦτόν τε καὶ ὄλβον,
 ἀλλὰ κακὴν πενίην, τὴν Ζεὺς ἀνδρεσσι δίδωσιν.
 νάσσατο δ' ἄγχ' Ἑλικῶνος οἰζυρῇ ἐνὶ κώμῃ,
 Ἄσκραν, χειμᾶ κακῇ, θέρει ἀργαλέῃ, οὐδέ ποτ' ἐσθλῇ.

The one who arrived here crossing a great sea
 after leaving Kyme in Aeolia by black ship,
 not fleeing wealth [*aphenos*] or riches and prosperity
 but evil poverty, which Zeus gives men.
 He settled near Helicon in a wretched village
 Ascra, bad in winter, rough in the heat, and never good.

Phoenix is technically a *metanastês*. Therefore, it is appropriate that he lives not in the center but at the margin of Peleus' realm, as he says (*naion eskhatiên Phthiês*) in a comment coming immediately after his mention of his new riches. Structurally, his description of his flight and settlement thus parallels Hesiod's description of his father's move from Asia Minor. (Compare line-initial *naion* "I was living" at *Iliad* 9.484 with *nassato*, "he lived," same position, *Works and Days* 639.)

Many readers, from Aeschylus on, have been charmed by the remarkable appeal that Phoenix makes in the last lines (485–95) of his "autobiography," in which he recalls his care for the toddler Achilles and acknowledges the emotional compensation he derived from the boy.²⁹ Ironically, this beloved substitute son, Achilles, seems also to have constructed an image for his *own* condition based on his acquaintance with Phoenix, just as Phoenix defines himself here in terms of his relation to Achilles. For Achilles is the only speaker in Homeric poetry to use the word *metanastês* and does so first in this scene. He begins his reply to the last embassy appeal by Ajax by alluding to his anger (*kholos*) at the way Agamemnon has mistreated him, "like some sort of honorless immigrant" (*metanastês*—*Iliad* 9.646–48). The dramatic situation adds to the force of Achilles' words, since the first character in the poem to have described himself as a true *metanastês* (albeit without using the term) is sitting within earshot.

²⁹ Cf. the nurse's speech in *Choephoroe* (lines 748–62).

The word appears only one other time in Homer, in a repetition of this line addressed by Achilles to Patroclus (16.59). Is it a coincidence that Patroclus happens to be the only other *metanastês* to tell his immigration story in the poem? We learn it later, when his *psûkhê* visits Achilles to appeal for funeral rites; the discourse situation is thus like that of Phoenix's speech, as Patroclus begs not to be left alone after death, but to have his bones mingled with Achilles' in one urn (23.83–84, 91; cf. 9.437–38). This emotional appeal forms a ring-composition around its rhetorical “proof,” the “autobiography” in which it emerges that Patroclus fled his own country because he killed a boy—“the son of Amphidamas”—in anger over a dice-game (*Iliad* 23.85–90). Like Phoenix, Patroclus recalls his own father (Menoitios, who brought him as a boy to Phthia), the kindness of Achilles' father (who received him and made him Achilles' *therapôn*), and the theme of “ignorance” (his own at the time of the manslaughter: *nêpios*, 23.88). In sum, we are dealing here with an archaic poetic *topos*.³⁰ Phoenix and Patroclus supplicate Achilles by establishing their bond with him, made possible by his father's behavior when they had emigrated to Phthia. Their extra-legal status at the time offered an extreme test case; as we can discern from Achilles' phrase, the *metanastês* was typically and understandably “without honor” (*atimêtos*). Part of the implicit message to Achilles is that he should now, like Peleus, gracefully meet the challenge of similar extreme cases. Achilles' use of the word *metanastês*, on the other hand, shows that he elicits sympathy by conjuring up his addressee's worst fears: if not for his father, they, too, might have been scorned.

What does this *topos* mean for Hesiod's composition? I am suggesting, first of all, that even in its smallest details, especially that of his father's career, the *persona* of Hesiod is a *traditional* way of framing the type of “exhortation to wisdom” poetry embodied in the *Works and Days*. More evidence of the traditional associations of this *topos* helps us appreciate the integral nature of other parts of Hesiod's poem. Strabo (9.5.18) attributes to Demetrius of Scepsis a tradition that Phoenix chose to flee to Phthia

³⁰ “Archaic” not just because it already shows formal patterning in Homer, like a type-scene, but also because it shows signs of affiliation with the Indo-European institution of fosterage. Appeals made to the hero Cúchulainn in the Old Irish *Cattle-Raid of Cooley* use fosterage-ties as a similar basis for appeals. Mühlestein 1981, 85–91 notices the generic appropriateness of the names of Phoenix's kin for a figure who “rouses” (cf. Ormenos) Achilles to “ward off” (cf. Amyntor) attack. Bannert 1981, 91 notes the parallels in the careers of Phoenix and Patroclus without attributing importance to their metanastic status. Ephorus (FGrHist F 100) said that Hesiod's father left Cyme after killing a kinsman, a tradition resembling that attached to Patroclus and to yet another advisor-figure, Theoclymenus (*Odyssey* 15.224). And Odysseus, as well as being the prototypical outsider on his *nostos*, was said to have fled to Italy after being condemned by the Ithacans for manslaughter of the suitors: Aristotle fr. 507 Rose = Plutarch *Quaestiones Graecae* 14.

because his grandfather Ormenos had founded it. The story goes that Ormenos had two sons, Amyntor (father of Phoenix) and Euaemon, father of Eurypylus. The shared right to succession (*diadokhê koinê*) was given over to Phoenix's cousin *because* Phoenix left his country. In other words, the lore about Phoenix combines the equivalents of Hesiod's father (as *metanastês*) and Hesiod himself (dispossessed of his rightful share).³¹ This suggests to me that these two themes within the *Works and Days* have an underlying link: it is the disaster of immigration that problematizes patrimony. Some might object that Hesiod is, in fact, not himself a *metanastês*.³² While it is true that he never tells whether he is a first-generation Boeotian or not, another piece of lore concerning this theme reminds us that the consistent Greek representation of father-son bonds puts the question in a different light. Pausanias, explaining why before the return of the Dorians only those Peloponnesians in Argos and Sparta were called Achaeans, reports that it was because Achaeus' sons Archander and Architeles emigrated from Phthiotis to Argos, where Archander stayed. And Archander, the actual immigrant (who came *from* the precise area that Phoenix fled *to*) gave the name *Metanastês* to his *son*, an event which Pausanias reads as Archander's claim to settle the new land (*Description of Greece* 7.1.6). Whether Hesiod is first or second-generation off the boat is thus moot.

We have seen that the metanastic perspective unites themes that are not overtly connected in Hesiodic poetry. The themes did not *have* to be, if we believe that these were traditionally related and that an audience was used to their mutual relation. For a later audience of Athenians, a people whose local mythology affirmed that they alone of Greeks were not immigrants (μοῦνοι δὲ ἑόντες οὐ μετανάσται Ἑλλήνων, Herodotus *Histories* 7.161.18–19), the metanastic perspective formed an integral part of dramatic, historical, and oratorical conceptualizations of “Greekness.”³³ The work of Herodotus can be read, in part, within this framework, especially when we consider the thematic force of the final scene of Book 9 (122.5). In this carefully placed anecdote, Cyrus, the Persian king, is remembered as having once resisted his advisors. When they complained of inhabiting a small, rough country

³¹ The detail about Eurypylus opens new perspectives on *Iliad* 11.809–48, the scene in which he is healed by Patroclus (who resembles Phoenix, as we have seen) using medical skills that Cheiron (another wisdom-poetry narrator) taught Achilles. One could read the scene as a vindication of Phoenix by proxy.

³² But note the *Vita* by Tzetzes and the *Suda* entry (s.v. “Hesiodos”) assume he emigrated with his family; texts in Jacoby 1930, 112, 114.

³³ As can be seen from the passages cited in Welskopf 1985, cols. 1166–72.

and suggested moving to a better (μεταναστάντες ἐκ ταύτης ἄλλην σχωμεν ἀμείνω), he advised them (παραίνεε) that to do so would mean eventual subjection to others, since “soft” men came from soft places. At first glance, the pragmatics of this exchange may appear to be the reverse of what I have been sketching, since the advisor-figure, here himself a king, speaks to his own people and refuses to be a *metanastês*, even though his advice closely resembles the immigrant Hesiod's preference for restraint instead of appropriation, as in the poet's characterization of the greedy “kings” as fools who do not know “how much more is half than the whole or how much benefit comes in mallow and asphodel” (*Works and Days* 40–41). But of course this criticism of Persian expansion is an indirect praise of a traditional Greek sense of limit and “Cyrus” is a Herodotean persona, a wise advisor who *is* foreign to the intended *external* audience of the composition.

Looking briefly at the lore surrounding a similar Herodotean metanastic persona, Anacharsis the Scythian, we might see, first, that there are even more themes in the *Works and Days* appropriate to the generic “outsider,” and second, that the speech-habits associated with such wise immigrants can help us understand the poetic structure of Hesiod's didactic composition. Anacharsis, son of a royal Scythian and Greek mother, spoke both languages and thus could criticize either culture.³⁴ His critique of Greek behavior at many points resembles the Hesiodic stance: his caution against the tongue, for example, as the “best and worst” part of a person can be compared to Hesiod's depiction of language at *Works and Days* 719–21, where the tongue is called the “best storehouse” for humans when used sparingly.³⁵ Like Hesiod, he was said to have written about simplicity of life.³⁶ More intriguing are the quite specific parallels between the stories about these two moralists. Both have problems with their brothers: Anacharsis was said to be the brother of the king of Scythia and was killed by him while they were out hunting together, because his brother did not like his newly acquired Hellenism. Some reported that he was slain while performing Greek rites (Herodotus *Histories* 4.76, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Philosophers* 1.102).³⁷ Again, like the Hesiodic persona (*Works and Days* 618–49), Anacharsis has a low opinion of sailing: he said the hull's four-finger width showed how

³⁴ Herodotus *Histories* 4.76–77 is the earliest source; full testimonia are in Kindstrand 1981.

³⁵ See Kindstrand 1981, 53–54; cf. *Works and Days* 321–26.

³⁶ Kindstrand 1981, 61–65, detailing a tradition found from Ephorus on.

³⁷ Kindstrand 1981, 10–11 explores the evidence. The Herodotean account may place the death near a grove of Hecate, reminding one of the close relation between poet and goddess in the *Theogony*.

close was death for passengers and called those vessels safest that had been hauled ashore (Diogenes Laertius 1.103–4). The Scythian's suspicion about sailing is probably tied to a negative view of mercantile trading in the *agora*, which Anacharsis is represented (Diogenes Laertius 1.105) as equating with mutual deception. We can compare once again the Hesiodic preference for subsistence farming over the dangers of sea trading (and also against hanging about the *agora*—*Works and Days* 28–32).³⁸

If Anacharsis gives us another evolutionary stage, as it were, of an essentially similar mode of moral critique, it becomes more interesting that this figure brings with him a traditional verbal style. Here the representations of narrative lore and the conventions of poetics meet. Diogenes Laertius (1.101) records that the manner of Anacharsis gave rise to a proverb—"speech from the Scythians"—because he was outspoken (διὰ τὸ παρρησιαστικῆς εἶναι). "Outspokenness" or "free-speaking" (*parrhesia*) was, of course, well known as a valued concomitant of Athenian democracy.³⁹ The association between this style of speaking and "outsiders" like Anacharsis originates in the special stance that certain figures on the margin are enabled, by their position, to assume. Within the *Iliad*, the blame-filled Thersites, marginalized by his ugly appearance and hate-relationship with the major heroes (*Iliad* 2.215–20), functions as a constant critic of the Achaean leadership. The harsh treatment he receives at the hands of Odysseus nevertheless does not disguise the essential truth, albeit exaggerated, of his denunciation of Agamemnon. For our investigation it is important to notice that his outspoken speech, viewed by epic as abuse (cf. *neikee*—*Iliad* 2.224) matches at several points the advice-poetry of Hesiod: both Hesiod and Thersites offer unwelcome remarks to kings; both are described as verbally adept (Thersites as "clear-voiced speaker," *ligus agoretês*, *Iliad* 2.246; cf. the comparison of poet and nightingale in fable at *Works and Days* 208); both are defeated by a stronger opponent on the side of the kings.⁴⁰

Phoenix, another *metanastês*, as we have seen, also is permitted *parrhesia* on the grounds of his close relationship with Achilles; the scholiast on *Iliad*

³⁸ For explication of the way in which this Anacharsis story represents an old aristocratic Greek ideal, seen also in advice poetry of Theognis, see Kurke 1989. She notes (p. 538 n. 9) that Hesiod, unlike Anacharsis, does not denigrate trade so much as warn against dangers of the sea.

³⁹ See Ober 1989, 296–97, 322 with further bibliography there.

⁴⁰ For extended comparison of the poet of *Works and Days* and Thersites, see Puelma 1972; also, remarks of Zanker 1986, 33. The similarities make sense when we realize that the Thersites figure fits the conventions of an old tradition of blame-poetry, seen elsewhere in Archilochean *iambos*: see Nagy 1999b, 253–64. Hesiod would then be employing the poetics of a widely known genre.

9.496 refers to his use of “the frankness of upbringing” (ἡ τῆς ἀνατροφῆς παρρησία) in persuading his ward. His freedom of speaking on the basis of his outside status is thus doubly determined, as Phoenix is neither a full member of the local in-group nor of Achilles’ family. Different as these two Iliadic characters may appear, blamer of kings on one hand, advisor of heroes on the other, the depiction of their *parrhesia* allows us to apply an archaic, native poetic model to Hesiod.

“Outspokenness,” I suggest, is actually both a social phenomenon and a Greek literary style. As the latter, it best describes the open-ended, all-embracing structure of Hesiodic verse. The overriding structural fact of Phoenix’s speech at *Iliad* 9.434–605 is its blend of several distinct narrative genres: personal appeal based on a shared memorate (434–45), autobiography (435–95), allegory and personification in an *ainos* (495–514), mythic narrative (524–99). I pointed out above that the *Works and Days* happens to feature a similar genre mix. Now I return to this point having offered an explanation in terms of larger themes within Greek literature and having given this speaking strategy a name: the quality that critics have noticed in Phoenix’s advice and Hesiod’s poem is not an *accidental* similarity, but a basic convention of the *parrhesia* that both speakers are entitled to by reason of their metanastic status. In other words, “free-speaking” implies that the speaker is so impassioned as to use every available mode of persuasion. If this speech happens to be criticism and is viewed from the unwilling recipient’s standpoint, we see it described as *neikos* “blame,” but its fullness and seeming haphazardness still persist: Thersites knew “many words in his mind, disorderly, random, not according to order (ἄκοσμά τε πολλά τε ἥδη μάψ, ἀτὰρ οὐ κατὰ κόσμον) for contending with kings” (*Iliad* 2.213–14).⁴¹

We should compare this epic description of Thersites’ rhetoric with some evaluations made of Hesiod’s own style. The alleged lack of overt logical connection in the *Works and Days* that Eric Havelock attributed variously to Hesiod’s entrapment by familiar formulas, partial memory of the *Iliad*, or pre-philosophical thought is characterized by another critic, Martin West as “mental hops, skips, and jumps,” and a “hotchpotch,” while B. M. W. Knox adduces Hesiod’s lack of an architectonic quality he claims to find in Homeric epic and complains, regarding Hesiodic use of arguments, “if one

⁴¹ It is significant corroboration that Old Comedy, which describes itself in terms of *parrhesia*, presents a similar generic mix (lyric, invective, myth) and creates similar interpretive problems for critics uncomfortable with its open-ended structure.

doesn't fully explain the facts, he will give us two."⁴² The Homeric poet's critique of Thersitean *parrhesia* makes sense from the aristocratic standpoint of the genre; but modern criticism of the closely related Hesiodic speaking style has failed to understand that fullness, apparent digressiveness, and genre mixing are *positive* poetic values, virtual identification marks that cue an audience into an important genre of speaking. The problems—if there are any—of Hesiodic “structure” have to be read within the demands of a genre that may have had more in common with Roman satire than Greek epic.⁴³

The most important poetic strategy for constructing such an open-ended advice composition as the *Works and Days* is the inclusion of a number of other genres. One such type, the coded message of the fable (*ainos*), has been the focus of much good work recently and needs no further explication here.⁴⁴ Instead, I wish to point out how we might discover pervasive adaptations of two other separate genres in the *Works and Days*—songs and proverbs—once we allow that the poem's own generic conventions make room for such re-shapings. The only other prerequisite for an appreciation of Hesiod's technique is that one understand how a poet working in a traditional oral medium can adapt diction and meter, interweaving genres at will, with virtuosic skill and flexibility. The detailed study of living oral poetries convinces one that this is the case.⁴⁵ Investigation of how generic adaptations take place in actual oral performances can thus converge with the growing critical awareness that Hesiodic poetry represents an oral art.⁴⁶

In at least one dimension, the representation of himself within his poem, Hesiod is more like a lyric poet than Homer.⁴⁷ It is especially interesting,

⁴² Havelock 1966, 62–63; West 1976, 385; West 1981, 65; Knox 1989, 5, 18. An important exception is the work of Broccia 1969, 41–51, which shows the subtle topical critique accomplished by this sort of Hesiodic “doubling” rhetoric. Recently, Hamilton 1989, 77 has explicated a “subtle but noticeable series of echoes articulating the main parts of the *Works and Days*.”

⁴³ See R. Hunt 1981.

⁴⁴ See Nagy 1990, 57, 256 and 1999, 222–41.

⁴⁵ From the rich recent scholarship demonstrating this flexibility, I single out in particular Connelly 1986; Slyomovics 1987; J. M. Foley 1991.

⁴⁶ For the first fully developed demonstration of this discovery, see Edwards 1971; also Hoekstra 1957. Peabody 1975 offers a detailed attempt at reading *Works and Days* as oral poetry on the level of the structure of the “song” as a whole. On the level of phrasing, see Minton, 1975. As another oralist, Patrizia Mureddu, notes (1983), Parry 1930, 90–91 had already suggested that Hesiod as well as Homer composed in oral style. Delay in following up this insight has stemmed partly from critical disagreement over the value of formula-counting, and indeed, the definition of a formula. There is still much work to be done on evaluation of repeated diction in Hesiod; see Fernández Delgado 1982.

⁴⁷ Stein 1990, 1 notes the resemblance, but it does not necessarily follow that this seemingly personal voice reflects use of writing by Hesiod and also a later stage of composition than Homeric

then, to find close verbal resemblance between parts of the *Works and Days* and lyric poetry actually attested. A prime example of this overlap comes in the description of the height of summer (*Works and Days* 582–88):

Ἦμος δὲ σκόλυμός τ' ἀνθεῖ καὶ ἡχέτα τέτιξ
 δενδρέφ' ἐφεζόμενος λιγυρὴν καταχεύετ' αἰοιδὴν
 πυκνὸν ὑπὸ πτερύγων, θέρεος καματώδεος ὥρη,
 τῆμος πιόταταί τ' αἶγες, καὶ οἶνος ἄριστος, 585
 μαχλόταται δὲ γυναῖκες, ἀφαιρότατοι δέ τοι ἄνδρες
 εἰσὶν, ἐπεὶ κεφαλὴν καὶ γούνατα Σείριος ἄξει,
 ἀυαλέος δέ τε χρῶς ὑπὸ καύματος

When the artichoke flowers and the shrill cicada
 perched on a tree pours down clear song
 dense, from its wings, in the time of tough heat,
 then goats are fattest, wine is best,
 women most wanton, men most weak,
 since Sirius parches head and knees,
 And from the heat the skin is dry ...

Hesiod goes on at 589–96 to construct a picture of a *locus amoenus*, where one can relieve the day's heat with breeze and shade, food and wine. The drinking motif and other details link this passage with Alcaeus F 347 (Voigt), as noticed by commentators from the time of Proclus (iii 281 Gaisford):

τέγγε πλεύμονας οἶνω, τὸ γὰρ ἄστρον περιτέλλεται,
 ἃ δ' ὥρα χαλέπα, πάντα δὲ δίψαισ' ὑπὸ καύματος,
 ἄχει δ' ἐκ πετάλων ἄδεα τέτιξ ...
 ἄνθει δὲ σκόλυμος, νῦν δὲ γυναῖκες μιαρώταται
 λεπτοὶ δ' ἄνδρες, ἐπεὶ < > κεφάλαν καὶ γόνα Σείριος 5
 ἄσδει

Drench the lungs with wine, for the star returns.
 The season is harsh, all is thirsty from the heat,
 the sweet cicada shrills from the leaves.
 The artichoke flowers and now women are most damnable,
 and men weak, since Sirius parches the head and knees.

The poems' shared diction need not, however, mean that one poet copied the other; as J. T. Hooker has seen, both can draw independently on a store

epic; nor do I think we must immediately assume that Hesiodic verse is "gattungsmässig völlig anders" than lyric (p. 3). For fuller comparison, see Arrighetti 1975, 5–36.

of related phrases and themes.⁴⁸ In fact, I believe we can go a step further. On a comparative basis, such detailed elaboration about the dangers and delights of a season is not easy to parallel in other didactic poems, but it does have a congener in song traditions: we might think of the Middle English poem “Somer is i-comen in, loude syng cuckow ...” (MS Harley 978). A more extensive parallel is provided by folk poetry from Russia, where a strong tradition of seasonal folk songs and “calendar-songs” (*koljadki*) has survived into the twentieth century and been widely collected. The Russian songs are marked by often enigmatic language and by a relationship to folk rituals: they are the texts for performances involving traditional actions as well as words. The mention of idealized seasonal conditions—abundance of cattle and grain, prosperity of the house—occurs in a context of “wish-incantation,” according to specialists.⁴⁹ In brief, I propose that Hesiod incorporated into his hexameter verse the language of a seasonal *song* he knew, one that survived in another stylization by Alcaeus, in what may have been an older metrical and linguistic shape.

Another section of Hesiod’s poem might be further interpreted through comparison with folk song, specifically the Rhodian swallow song attested in Athenaeus (PMG 848). The Hesiod passage (*Works and Days* 504–25) delineates the rigors of the month Lenaion, when all the days are “ox-flaying” cold and Boreas blows through trees and glens, hide and hair, but does not affect a desirable girl at home (519–25):

καὶ διὰ παρθενικῆς ἀπαλόχροος οὐ διάησιν,	
ἥ τε δόμων ἔντοσθε φίλῃ παρὰ μητέρι μίμνει,	520
οὐπω ἔργα ἰδυῖα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης,	
εὖ τε λοεσσαμένη τέρενα χροά καὶ λίπ’ ἐλαΐφ	
χρῖσαμένη μυχίῃ καταλέξεται ἔνδοθι οἴκου,	
ἥματι χειμερίφ, ὅτ’ ἀνόστεος ὄν πόδα τένδει	
ἔν τ’ ἀπύρφ οἴφ καὶ ἥθεσι λευγαλέοισιν	525

And he does not blow through the tender-skinned girl,
who stays in her house with her dear mother,
not yet aware of golden Aphrodite’s works,

⁴⁸ Hooker 1977, 80–81. Nagy 1990, 462–63 notes that the metrical variation reinforces Hooker’s argument. The old view of Page 1955, 305–6 and others that Alcaeus “translated” Hesiod is unfortunately continued in Meyerhoff 1984, 158–60.

⁴⁹ For texts in Russian, see Poltoratzky 1964, 27–40. On the function of *koljadki*, see Sokolov 1950, 180–85 and Chicherov 1975, 113–22. Erren 1990, 190–91 sees the *Works and Days* as a new blend of political rhetoric and a type of calendar poetry that he traces to Sumerian literature.

her soft skin well bathed, anointed with oil,
 she lies down in the inner room of the house
 on a winter's day, when the boneless one gnaws
 his own foot, in his fireless house and miserable haunts.

The drama of this Hesiodic vignette might result from the poet's transformation of details from a real dramatic *song* situation into a third-person narration. In a Rhodian custom (performed in Boedromion), boys solicit food and wine while singing, "She's come, she's come, the swallow, bringing fine seasons." If not treated, they claim, their trick will be to break in and take the woman sitting inside, since "she's a little one and we will easily carry her" (lines 15-16). Without claiming that the poet of the *Works and Days* knew this song, we can still imagine that similar seasonal poetry was available to him. The safe inner space of the *oikos*, source of wealth and fertility, is contrasted, in both Hesiod and the folk song, with the violent exterior where hungry males threaten to invade; the parallel is closer when we recall Boreas' mythical role as abductor of women (Plato *Phaedrus* 229c-d). Furthermore, if we consider the deep antiquity of the sexual imagery of *Works and Days* 507-25, evident from the poetic cognates of the deprived "boneless one," in Old Irish and Old English, it appears likely that Hesiod's poem reshapes, in a new setting, words most appropriate to a ritual performance.⁵⁰

kennings, like the "boneless one" of *Works and Days* 524, have often been remarked as distinctively Hesiodic, but, as I have suggested, may also be taken as arising within the smaller song-genres that the *Works and Days* has absorbed in order to fulfill its larger purpose as instructional (rather than ritual) verse. Again, a modern instance may illustrate how such enigmatic language acquires its own native interpretation through a folk-ritual enactment. In another Rhodian composition, a modern folk remedy for erysipelas, these words are repeated seven times while burning bits of cotton and wood are flicked off the infected area:

*kato sto giallo stin ammo/ oi spanoi zevgari kanoun/
 vazoun tis psoles ton aletri/kai t' archeidia ton zevgari
 mi oспорos ton matiasei/miti fokio na rizosi*

Down on the beach, on the sand,
 the beardless ones are mating,
 they use the penis like a plough

⁵⁰ Watkins 1978, 231-35. Again, I would compare Russian *koljadki*, with their clear fertility functions. For exhaustive treatment of the "boneless one," see now Bader 1989.

and their testicles like a pair of oxen.
 Let not the Evil Eye fall on the seeds
 nor the erysipelas take root.⁵¹

In this sort of composition, then, condensed narrative and incantation coexist. In Hesiod, ritual has fallen away; the parallel is rather between “narratives” (like the calendar vignettes) and another genre, precepts. In this second embedded genre, distinction is not formally made between such precepts as “Do not make a companion equal to a brother” (707) and “Do not cross the fair water of ever-flowing rivers before praying” (737–38): ritual and ethics converge.⁵² Proverbial expression as a genre of social speech was probably a contemporary phenomenon for the poet of the *Works and Days*, as it is in most traditional societies. In late nineteenth-century Moscow, Roman Jakobson recalls, “Children strenuously practised the Russian art of interspersing their discourse with proverbial saws and thus learned to alternate and coordinate their individual experience with established maxims.”⁵³ My point is that Hesiodic stylization of this social genre results in changes in the “texture” of the poem, which make it sound quite un-Homeric. The primary difference between his poetic proverbs and the everyday speech-genre is that the latter are not accumulated: one “performs” them as isolated items to point up an argument. Proverbs have their own poetic markings—internal rhymes, assonance, alliteration, binary structure, paronomasia. These, along with positive-negative expressions (cf. *Theogony* 551 *gnô rh'oud' êgnoiêse*, “he knew and did not fail to know”) and compulsive etymologizing can be seen as extending throughout Hesiodic technique (yet not Homeric) from an original function as devices to make memorable *proverbial* expression.⁵⁴ Once proverbs are joined, as in the *Works and Days*, the poetic possibilities multiply. Couplets and triplets built around one word or root and varying

⁵¹ Cited by Lawrence Durrell 1960, 195–96, quoting from a paper by A. R. Mills contributed to the *Bulletin for the History of Medicine* (n. d.).

⁵² On the homology of moral and ritual correctness in Theognis and Hesiod, see Nagy 1992, 69.

⁵³ Jakobson 1966, 638. Compare M. L. West's note (1981, 61): “The Russian traveller Valikhanov encountered a sultan of one of the Kazakh tribes whom he took to be an imbecile, because his intermittent utterances consisted of rhymed couplets of rather general import, accompanied by alarming rollings of the eyes. Probably the man was simply making conversation in the most formal and polite way he knew.”

⁵⁴ On internal marking of proverbs, see Russo 1983, 121–30. Examples of the techniques and comparison with other archaic poetic traditions are in Campanile 1977, 105–6; also, Cantarella 1931. In archaic Irish poetic texts and in the *Mahabharata*, there occur maxims of legal, medical, religious content, similar to Hesiod's and also marked by emphatic poetic features: see Campanile et al. 1974, 239–44. See Durante 1976, 131, 142, 149 for useful parallels in Vedic poetry.

the series of end-stopped, one-line precepts, make a more dramatic performance, artful in its own terms. When runs of proverbs occur, we can hear the hexameter break up, as if the poet were shifting rhythm using a different, more rapid meter. Emphasizing word-breaks, we find such syntactically bipartite lines as the following (*Works and Days* 308–13):⁵⁵

ἐξ ἔργων δ' ἄνδρες
πολύμηλοί τ' ἀφνειοί τε,
καί τ' ἐργαζόμενος
πολὺ φίλτερος ἀθανάτοισιν ...
ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος,
ἀεργίη δέ τ' ὄνειδος. 310
εἰ δέ κεν ἐργάξῃ,
τάχα σε ζηλώσει ἀεργὸς
πλουτεῦντα πλούτῳ δ'
ἀρετὴ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ.

From works are men
cattle-rich and wealthy
and the working man
is dearer to the gods ...

Work is no shame
worklessness is shame.
If you work,
soon, the workless one will envy
you making fortune. On fortune
follows excellence and glory.

The claim that such Hesiodic verse is somehow less elegant than Homer's cannot be sustained if one considers metrical variety. More than a century ago, Paulson showed that Hesiod's verse constantly changes hexameter shapes (by varying the number and position of spondees in each line): the longest passage formed of identical metrical sequences in Hesiod comprises only five lines (*Theogony* 745–49) and even these lines feature word-breaks in different places, when compared with one another.⁵⁶ What may give a different, slower sound to Hesiodic verse is its higher proportion of verses

⁵⁵ Pellizer 1972a suggests that proverbs functioned as pre-constituted metrical units (paroemiac-shaped) for the poet of the *Works and Days*. This would explain the patterning exhibited, but there is still a certain amount of joining, enjambment, and breaking of the metrical frame, which I take to be the poet's innovatory art.

⁵⁶ Paulson 1887, 1.

containing one or more spondees.⁵⁷ A further distinctive touch is the combination of the spondaic type with proverbial language falling into balanced clauses, or using positive-negative expressions. An extreme illustration for several of these tendencies comes at *Works and Days* 354 (here spaced to show the major word-breaks, with underlines to show spondaic phrases):

kai domen hos ken dôl kai mê domen hos ken mê dôl

To capture the balance and rhyme we might break up the line graphically in translation:

And give to one who gives; and don't
give to one who won't
give.

Similar phrase structure underlies *Works and Days* 353, where there is only one spondee, but an important one, coming at the spot where a conjunction stitches the two line-halves together:

Ton phileonta philein, kai tôi prosionti proseinai.

The befriender befriend and the approacher approach.

From such examples, one can soon see that Hesiodic poetry in this one, seemingly small feature differs from Homeric because the meter is symptomatic of a more pervasive rhetorical strategy, that of embedding proverbs, with their pre-existing metrical and poetic values, into a larger composition.⁵⁸

Now that we have been led by Hesiod's metanastic stance to consider genre-inclusiveness and thus explore small-scale features like meter, it is time to connect the "immigrant" persona with one more puzzling aspect of this poetry that also makes it both like and unlike Homeric verse: its dialect. Despite the autobiographical detail in the poems, it remains indisputable that Hesiod's language is more Ionic than Homer's.⁵⁹ He even uses an Ionic

⁵⁷ See Paulson 1887, 4–6 for the statistics on spondees: 45% of verses in *Works and Days* have two or more spondees vs. 31% in, e.g., Book 1 of the *Iliad*; see also West 1966, 93.

⁵⁸ Fernández-Delgado 1982 after reviewing theories of the development of the hexameter out of shorter lines, proposes that these preforms were mainly used for *gnomic* expressions of Hesiodic type.

⁵⁹ Edwards 1971, 195–96 summarizes the linguistic features involved, e.g., distribution of genitive plural *-eôn/-ôn* as opposed to *-aôn*. Pavese 1972, 52–54 admits that some elements are organic Ionisms, e.g., neglect of digamma (conserved late in actual Boeotian) is much more frequent in Hesiod. Nagy 1992, 61 points out that Hesiodic poetry's "self-proclaimed Boeotian provenience would be nearly impossible to detect on the basis of language alone."

month name, Lenaion, when a different, Boeotian name existed.⁶⁰ Some have suggested historical solutions, such as the presence of Ionian singers on the mainland in the eighth century.⁶¹ Others point to the Ionic heritage of hexameter verse, while assuming this was the poetic *koine* in Boeotia as well. And it is true that “We should look to Ionia rather than to Dark Age Boeotia for the precursor of the *Works and Days*.”⁶² But rather than emphasize the chronologically later character of Hesiodic diction vs. Homeric, I suggest that we put the question in performance terms. If Hesiod “sounds” markedly Ionic to an audience, which means the poet chooses expressions involving known Ionisms instead of traditional unmarked phrases, what message does an audience get?⁶³ The same message, I believe, that a stand-up comedian transmits in doing “dialect” jokes: i.e., this speaker is a foreigner and the discourse has something to do with his foreignness.⁶⁴ The “foreign” dialect of Ionia is overemphasized to shore up the persona of the “outsider.” In other words, Hesiod’s metanastic fiction is sustained even into details of phonology. Another strategy complements this. West notes, “there is nothing in Hesiod which need be Boeotian,” but he also observes that besides the highly Ionic coloring of the poems there are undisputed Aeolisms.⁶⁵ Three of these occur in the *Works and Days* passage on seafaring. And one affects the very word “I advise,” a key term for the entire composition—here (*Works and Days* 683), *ainêmi*, rather than Ionic *aineô*. In choosing this, Hesiod is not simply mimicking his father’s speech, but identifying himself with Aeolic Cyme, speaking the language of the old country, as he performs in the new.

What might this mean for the interpretation of the *Works and Days* as a whole? I suggest that it further allows us to read the poem in conjunction with Ionic elegiac poetry (much of which is composed by a “Megarian” Theognis!). There is no need to take Hesiodic poetry as the product of

⁶⁰ See Nagy 1992, 63. Hoekstra 1957, 199 suggests the name can be used because the public in Boeotia knew Ionic poetry so well.

⁶¹ Hoekstra 1965, 25 n. 3.

⁶² West 1978, 26.

⁶³ Edwards 1971, 38 believes Hesiod “shows himself acquainted with the hexameter tradition in a later phase, as is evident not only from the general Ionic appearance of his language ... , but also from particular expressions with these features”

⁶⁴ Lamberton 1988, 111 finds the same analogy to stand-up comedy congenial for explaining how the seemingly haphazard texture of the *Works and Days* occurs when the poet consciously makes his organization *sound* like the “explicitly free and arbitrary choice of a highly individualized speaker.” On the loosely connected style of the *Works and Days*, see further Chapter 10 above.

⁶⁵ West 1966, 90.

Boeotia, or concerned with a Boeotian audience, at all. We might instead read its context as the *eris* within the Ionic city-state and its topics as relevant to the struggles of oligarchs and tyrants on the eastern side of the Aegean. The mask of the Boeotian peasant in the *Works and Days* becomes protective coloring for an Ionian poet, or any other who might wish to adopt it.

Finally, it is through this image of the Hesiodic author as authoritative outsider that we can understand more clearly the poetic framework of the *Theogony*. The enigmatic words of the Muses to the poet at *Theogony* 26–28, whatever the deeper meaning of the divine claim to be able to tell “lies like the truth,” have the force of a prohibition; their “we know” is exclusive.⁶⁶ The line that the Muses draw between the shepherds and themselves stands as a sign of Hesiod’s status, as much as does his pastoral life on the physical margin of the community. Even when he appears to cross the line, through the Muses’ gift of song, his standing remains paradoxically that of the outsider, as he proceeds to commemorate those with higher authority: Zeus, the Muses, the well-speaking kings (*Theogony* 36–93). We could speculate on deeper origins for this stance, perhaps going back to shamanistic extra-body experiences as necessary for theogonic knowledge, a combination familiar from Orpheus lore.⁶⁷ The similarities in tone between Hesiodic poetry and Biblical prophetic poetry have been noticed by Wilamowitz, Dornseiff, Sinclair, Detienne, and others.⁶⁸ The scholiast to the *Theogony* proem (*ad* 32, 38) noted its mantic language. We hear a clearly prophetic voice in the style of *Works and Days* 182–201, where Hesiod decries the Iron Age dearth of *kharis* and *philia* and projects it into the future.

Equally compelling, but less obvious, are Hesiodic lines in both major poems that bear a striking dictional resemblance to Delphic hexameter oracles. At line 286 of the *Works and Days*, for example (Σοὶ δ’ ἐγὼ ἐσθλὰ νοέων ἐρέω, μέγα νήπιε Πέρση), Hesiod uses the same vocative expression, *mega nêpie*, as the Pythia does to Croesus (Herodotus *Histories* 1.85.2). The Hesiod line just before this, on the survival of the just man’s race, was attributed by the paroemiographer Apostolius to the Pythia herself. There are many other such overlaps.⁶⁹ The poet to whom were attributed the

⁶⁶ I am convinced by Ferrari’s argument (1988) that the Derridean reading of this scene by Pucci and Arthur is unsupported by the text. Griffith 1983, 48–49 recognizes a traditional statement of divine power vs. mortal in the song of the Muses.

⁶⁷ On which see West 1983, 4–6.

⁶⁸ Bibliography in Pellizer 1972a, 29–31.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Works and Days* 285 with Herodotus *Histories* 3.86.3; in part, *Works and Days* 648 = oracle at Herodotus 1.47; see Pellizer 1972b, 40 and Cantarella 1931, 5–10, who notes Waltz had already seen

Melampodia, *Khresmoi*, and *Ornithomanteia*, all concerned with divinatory acts, might well have posed as a *mantis* himself. Whether as travelling religious poet or spokesman for Delphi, Hesiod in this stance inevitably fits the metanastic persona, as Delphi was by definition the extra-polis sanctuary. Nor is “outsider” status coincidental to mantic functions: “where divination is by trance-mediumship the prophet is often a stranger, a person deemed free from partisan interest,” as Robert Parker reports.⁷⁰ This is to say, then, that the apparently diverse poetic personae of the adviser-critic in the *Works and Days* and the praiser of divinities in the *Theogony* are united on a higher level: as *metanastês* Hesiod suits both.

If the metanastic fiction underlying these personae survived, perhaps it was because it also suited the needs of later rhapsodes as well as it may have a composer from an earlier generation. Gregory Nagy has observed that the transcendental, Pan-Hellenic stance of the poet is “facilitated by the historical fact that the figure of Hesiod has no native city to claim him, since Askra was destroyed by Thespiiai.”⁷¹ I would add that travelling rhapsodes could integrate this lore with their own self-presentation as authoritative outsiders. This may explain why the prooimion and some autobiographical passages seem not to have been available in local Boeotian versions of Hesiod texts: their usefulness is precisely in the context of performance elsewhere and may conceivably have been developed by rhapsodes who never set foot on mainland Greece.⁷² At any event, the epitaph for Hesiod’s tomb in Orchomenus, as we find it embedded in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, a composition that undoubtedly owes much to rhapsodic performance and lore, depicts Hesiod as even in death a man without his own country, the eternal metanastic (lines 250–53 Allen):⁷³

Ἄσκη μὲν πατρίς πολυλήμιος, ἀλλὰ θανόντος
ὅστέα πληξίπων γῇ Μινυᾶς κατέχει

how *Works and Days* 235 relates to the curse of the Amphiissians in Aeschines *Orations* 3.33; see also McLeod 1961. Fernández-Delgado (1985) shows that the corpus of hexameter oracles represents a distinct, old tradition, which may have influenced Hesiodic and Homeric diction.

⁷⁰ See Parker 1985, 30. Again, I am reminded of the *Odyssey*’s metanastic mantic Theoclymenus.

⁷¹ Nagy 1992, 52.

⁷² On the problem, see Lamberton 1988b, 46–48, who posits a Hellenistic date for fixation of the autobiographical traditions. I agree but would stress their earlier oral performance function. Similar traditions must underlie the old lore in the *Certamen*, datable to the fourth century but probably stemming from lost sixth-century versions: see Richardson 1981.

⁷³ On the story about Hesiod’s bones being brought to Orchomenus (or Ozolian Locris, in another tradition) see Nagy 1992, 49.

Ἡσιόδου, τοῦ πλεῖστον ἐν ἀνθρώποις κλέος ἐστὶν
ἀνδρῶν κρινομένων ἐν βασάνῳ σοφίης.

Ascra is his fatherland, rich in grain, but now the land
of Minyans who goad the horse holds the bones
of the dead Hesiod, he whose renown is greatest
of men who are judged in the test of wisdom.

HESIOD, ODYSSEUS, AND THE INSTRUCTION OF PRINCES¹

It should no longer be necessary to point out the futility of any attempt to determine, from the texts alone, which passage was composed first: the lines of the *Theogony* proem that concern the Muse's gifts to kings (*Theogony* 79-93) or Odysseus' reply to the inhospitable taunt of the Phaeacian youth Euryalus (*Odyssey* 8.166-77). Priority-hunting, based on subjective notions of what is artful in archaic Greek poetry, has failed to answer the dilemma. New methods of approach are needed.²

The two passages in question are the following:

ξεῖν', οὐ καλὸν ἔειπες ἀτασθάλῳ ἀνδρὶ ἔοικας.
 οὕτως οὐ πάντεσσι θεοὶ χαρίεντα διδοῦσιν
 ἀνδράσιν, οὔτε φυῆν οὔτ' ἄρ' φρένας οὔτ' ἀγορητύν.
 ἄλλος μὲν γὰρ εἶδος ἀκιδνότερος πέλει ἀνήρ,
 ἀλλὰ θεὸς μορφήν ἔπεσι στέφει· οἱ δέ τ' ἐς αὐτὸν
 170
 τερπόμενοι λεύσσουσιν, ὁ δ' ἀσφαλέως ἀγορεύει,
αἰδοῖ μειλιχίῃ, μετὰ δὲ πρόπει ἀγορομένοισιν,
ἐρχόμενον δ' ἀνὰ ἄστυ θεὸν ὥς εἰσορόωσιν.
 ἄλλος δ' αὖ εἶδος μὲν ἀλίγκιος ἀθανάτοισιν,
 175
 ἀλλ' οὔ οἱ χάρις ἀμφιπεριστέφεται ἐπέεσσιν,
 ὥς καὶ σοὶ εἶδος μὲν ἀριπρεπές, οὐδέ κεν ἄλλως
 οὐδὲ θεὸς τεύξειε, νόον δ' ἀποφώλιός ἐστι.

(*Odyssey* 8.166-77)

Stranger, you have not spoken well; you seem like a man blind
with folly. So true is it that the gods do not give gracious gifts

¹ Originally published in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 114 (1984): 29-48.

² For the most complete bibliography on the problem, see Neitzel 1977, to which add Braswell 1981. On the problems of "borrowing" and "imitation" in an oral tradition see Janko 1982, 225.

to all alike, not form, nor mind, nor eloquence. For one man is inferior in looks, but the god sets a crown of beauty upon his words, and men look upon him with delight, and he speaks on unfalteringly with sweet modesty, and is conspicuous among the gathered people, and as he goes through the city men gaze upon him as upon a god. Another again is in looks like the immortals, but no crown of grace is set about his words. So also in your case your looks are preeminent, nor could a god himself improve them, but in mind you are stunted. [trans. Murray and Dimock 1995]

Καλλιόπη θ' ἡ δὲ προφερεστάτη ἐστὶν ἀπασέων.
 ἡ γὰρ καὶ βασιλεῦσιν ἅμ' αἰδοίοισιν ὀπηδεῖ. 80
 ὅντινα τιμήσουσι Διὸς κοῦραι μέγαλοιο
 γεινόμενόν τε ἴδωσι διοτρεφέων βασιλῆων,
 τῷ μὲν ἐπὶ γλώσση γλυκερὴν χεῖουσιν ἔερσην,
 τοῦ δ' ἔπε' ἐκ στόματος ῥεῖ μείλιχα οἱ δέ νυ λαοὶ
 πάντες ἐς αὐτὸν ὁρῶσι διακρίνοντα θέμιστας 85
 ἰθεῖησι δίκησιν ὁ δ' ἀσφαλέως ἀγορεύων
 αἰψά τι καὶ μέγα νείκος ἐπισταμένως κατέπαυσε·
 τούνεκα γὰρ βασιλῆες ἐχέφρονες, οὔνεκα λαοῖς
 βλαπτομένοις ἀγορήφι μετὰτροπα ἔργα τελεῦσι
 ῥηιδίως, μαλακοῖσι παραιφάμενοι ἐπέεσιν 90
ἐρχόμενον δ' ἂν' ἀγῶνα θεὸν ὥς ἰλάσκονται
αἰδοῖ μείλιχίη, μετὰ δὲ πρόπει ἀγρομένοισι.
 τοίη Μουσῶν ἱερὴ δόσις ἀνθρώποισιν.

(Theogony 79–93)

... and Calliope—she is the greatest of them all, for she attends upon venerated kings too. Whomever among Zeus-nourished kings the daughters of great Zeus honor and behold when he is born, they pour sweet dew upon his tongue, and his words flow soothingly from his mouth. All the populace look to him as he decides disputes with straight judgments; and speaking publicly without erring, he quickly ends even a great quarrel by his skill. For this is why kings are prudent, because when the populace is going astray in the assembly they easily manage to turn the deeds around, effecting persuasion with mild words; and as he goes up to the gathering they seek his favor like a god with soothing reverence, and he is conspicuous among the assembled people. Such is the holy gift of the Muses to human beings. [trans. Most 2006]

The passages share two and one-half verses. If we rule out the chance occurrence of such similar diction and the notion of borrowing, one possibility remains: parallel inheritance from a single common source. There is a way to agree with the Analysts that the resemblances here are not coincidental, while avoiding the critical traps of “imitation,” “adaptation,” or “borrowing.” As G. P. Edwards concludes, “We can never rule out the existence of an older place X, which provided a common source for both A and B at the lines in question, so making their chronological relationship impossible to determine.”³ I cannot claim to have discovered a poem which serves as the common source for the *Theogony* and *Odyssey* passages, but I can go beyond Edwards’s essentially negative conclusion: the two passages under consideration can be said to share a common genre, which generates the similar phrases in each place. By analyzing Greek and Old Irish texts, I propose to pinpoint the genre from which both Homer and Hesiod draw.

The generic elements to which I refer are best understood as belonging to “genres of discourse,” to use the phrase of the critic Tzvetan Todorov.⁴ He insists, first, that a genre is an institution of society, and so should interest historians and anthropologists as well as literary critics; the link between genre and social life will be important for the problem at hand.⁵ Second, Todorov points out that genre is simply the “historically attested codification of discursive properties” such as setting, addressee, speaker, diction, rhythm, and theme, the variables of any speech-act; in literature, these variables happen to be more rigidly defined and selected than they are in ordinary discourse. It is useful to think of genre, then, as a type of selective coding.⁶ I will return to this notion later in this paper. Suffice it to say for now that genre, because it is related to discourse, is implicit in

³ Edwards 1971, 189. Several scholars are careful to point out the possibility of common borrowing from tradition as regards these two passages: cf. Duban 1980, 12 n. 11; Walcot 1963, 11–12 and 1966, 124–25; West 1966, 183; the tradition involved is not specified by them. Concerning the *Theogony* passage, Edwards 1971, 168–69, while not denying the possibility of common inheritance, accepts earlier arguments for Homeric priority.

⁴ Todorov 1978 applies the notion to a range of modern works; see 1978, 51 for his definition of the term; and, for further comparison of rules of discourse with those of genre, see Todorov 1975, 362–63. Other useful work might be done, using Todorov’s notion, to recover the themes and diction appropriate to an archaic Greek system of genres. For a working model in one genre, see Pavese 1979.

⁵ Todorov 1978, 49. On genre as convention and institution, see the analysis of Raible 1980, 326.

⁶ Raible 1980, 325, 335–43 notes that genres, like texts and words themselves, are characterized by selection and abbreviation of elements in a system. From the perspective of a semiotician, Raible defines genre as a set of distinctive marks drawn from as many as six dimensions, including communication-situation.

any literary production: behind the words of a poem lie unspoken assumptions regarding the context and manner of communication proper to a given location, occasion, and interlocutors.

At times, this generic affiliation might be marked out by diction or syntax; the use of vocatives, for instance, is a traditional element in Greek poetic *parae-nesis* ("advice") from Homer on. At other times, the dramatic context by itself can mark a discourse as properly belonging to a certain genre, since the presence of speakers with a particular status naturally arouses generic expectations. The marking of a discourse as appropriate for a particular genre can occur even though the discourse is embedded within a composition of an entirely different genre. Thus, in the medium of Homeric poetry, where changes of speaker occur frequently, it is theoretically possible that each speaker's discourse shows signs of belonging to a particular genre. Nestor and Phoenix, for instance, are not just advisors: they become conduits for the genre of parae-netic poetry; Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen are not just lamenting women, but speakers *within* epic-poetry of lament poetry, which has a long and old tradition *outside* epic as well, a tradition most likely as old as epic, with its own conventions and stylizations of language, as Alexiou has shown.⁷ Although it may seem mechanical to describe epic characters in terms of their poetic affiliations in this way, such a view might help us to understand how such massive compositions as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* attained their bulk: by the introduction of pre-existing or contemporary non-epic genres. This mode of composition is exactly what gives both Homeric poems their convincingly realistic tone, producing in the audience the sense that actual words are being reported by the Muse (as the poet's ideology would declare). Stylized discourse, be it lament, advice, praise, or blame, is incorporated and preserved in the medium of Homeric hexameter verse.⁸

One more thing needs to be emphasized before I return to pinpoint the genre of *Odyssey* 8.166–77 and *Theogony* 79–93. It is a working principle of oral poetics that theme creates diction and similar themes create similar diction.⁹ By attributing certain themes to genres of discourse, I am adding

⁷ Alexiou 1974, 4–13, 161–84. Mawet 1975, 42ff. also traces elements of distinct genres within epic laments, raising the possibility that epic evolved from laments.

⁸ On the versatility of Homeric poetry in integrating various traditions, see Nagy 1999b, 6. Sinos 1980, 75 and n. 5 illustrates some ways in which the *Iliad* subsumes other traditional genres. Further on problems of genre-interaction in early Greek poetry: Latacz 1977, 1–20; Diller 1962, 44–46, 58; Puelma 1972, 86–87 (on genre *ainos*); Nagy 1999b, 235–41.

⁹ See Lord 1960, 49: "Formulas are, after all, the means of expressing the themes of the poetry." Nagy 1999b, 1–6 is a concise statement of the interworking of theme and diction in archaic Greek

another level to the hierarchy of traditional modes of expression in archaic Greek poetry. The lowest level of this hierarchy—the word or phrase—is often labeled *formula*, but one might call any one of these levels of expression “formulaic.”

With reference to the problem with which we began, then, I would claim that similar themes produce the resemblances. The themes are generated by a common source, an ancient genre of discourse, which has a basis in social fact of considerable antiquity, the discourse between a king (or advisor) and a prince. This genre has long been called “Instruction of Princes” (or *speculum principum*); its wide attestation is surveyed by West in his edition of the *Works and Days*, the best surviving reflection of the genre in Greek. We know that similar compositions in Greek once existed, especially from the fragments of a poem called the *Instructions of Cheiron* attributed to Hesiod (fr. 283–85 MW). The high status of the *Kheironos Hupothekai* as a source for instruction-poetry is evident in Pindar’s “citation” of the poem at *Pythian* 6.19–26:

σύ τοι σχεθών νιν ἐπὶ δεξιᾷ χειρός, ὀρθᾶν	
ἄγεις ἐφημοσύναν,	20
τά ποτ' ἐν οὔρεσι φαντὶ μεγαλοσθενεῖ	
Φιλύρας υἱὸν ὀρφανίζομένῳ	
Πηλεΐδᾳ παραινεῖν· μάλιστα μὲν Κρονίδαν,	
βαρύοπα στεροπᾶν κεραυνῶν τε πρύτανιν,	
θεῶν σέβεσθαι·	25
ταύτας δὲ μή ποτε τιμᾶς ἀμείρειν γονέων βίον	
πεπρωμένον.	

Truly, by keeping him at your right hand, you uphold the precept, whose words of advice they say Philyra’s son once gave to the mighty son of Peleus in the mountains, when he was away from his parents: above all gods to revere Cronus’ son, loud-voiced lord of lightning and thunder, and never to deprive of like honor one’s parents during their allotted lifetime. [trans. Race 1997]

Both the extant *Works and Days* and the fragmentary *Instructions of Cheiron* accord with other examples of this genre, in many literatures, in their concern with transmitting the rules for proper legal, religious, political, and social

material. I have sketched the relationship of theme to motif and phrase, within several European traditions, in Martin 1984b. The shared verses of the passages at hand are not “formulaic” in terms of phrase repetition (except for *Odyssey* 8.173 = *Theogony* 91, a fairly frequent phrase: cf. Krafft 1963, 69 n. 1).

behavior.¹⁰ While the *Works and Days*, along with similar poetry such as the elegiacs of Theognis, has long been recognized as *hupothêkai*, commentators on the *Theogony* have treated the poem as a compendium of lore about myth and cosmology, rightly noting its links with other theogonic texts but neglecting the frame-narrative, which includes the proem.¹¹ To my knowledge, the possibility of an embedded genre of instruction-poetry within the *Theogony* or the *Odyssey* has not been addressed.

To turn to the passages: what specifically marks these portions of the *Odyssey* and the *Theogony* as appropriate to a shared Instruction of Princes genre? Three elements occur in both that are closely similar in phrasing or situation. The first two are thematic and generate the shared diction; they comprise the theme of faultless speaking ability (*asphaleôs agoreuei*: *Odyssey* 8.171 and *Theogony* 86) and that of “honey-sweet respect” (*aidôî meilikhiêi*: *Odyssey* 8.172 and *Theogony* 92). The third element is dramatic context, which generates the “looking on” motif (*Odyssey* 8.173 and *Theogony* 85, 91). I shall discuss this later. The first two elements can be traced within poetry explicitly designated as “instructions”—the speaking-theme in the cognate Indo-European tradition of Old Irish poetry and the *aidôs*-theme within Greek tradition.

First, the speech theme. The Old Irish literary genre called *tecosc* (“instruction”) comprises five principal compositions, the earliest of which, *Audacht Morainn* (*AM*), dates from 700 CE and is therefore the earliest Western European specimen of the *speculum* genre. The *Audacht Morainn* (“Testament of Morann”) purports to be the death-bed instructions of the mythical first Irish lawmaker, Morann, to Neire, his foster-son, for transmission to the young king Feradach Find Fechnach. Irish tradition itself casts this poetry as an inheritance from deep antiquity; in fact, the *Audacht* contains nothing but pre-Christian material, and, in the words of Calvert

¹⁰ See West 1978, 7, 14–18. In terms of the definition of genre in Raible 1980, one could describe prince-instruction as set in a particular communication-situation (older man advising younger, usually at a point of crisis or initiation), with an open-ended structure (e.g., strings of injunctions), presented as either direct conversation or as a testament, governed by hierarchical order (injunctions in order of importance), with a “real” purpose (i.e., the genre presents itself as factual and necessary for world order). On the contents of the *Kheironos Hupothêkai*, see Schwartz 1960, 241 and Nagy 1982b, 61–62.

¹¹ Friedländer 1913, 558–616 outlines the similarities. On the inadequacy of the commonplace description of the *Works and Days* as merely “instructions” or “wisdom literature,” see R. Hunt 1981. An exception to the usual treatment of the *Theogony* is Detienne’s analysis (1967, 17–18) of the work as a praise-poem directed to Zeus as king.

Watkins, is a “window on a genre of Indo-European literature.”¹² The core of the *Audacht Morainn* deals with the notion of the Ruler’s Truth, a force brought into life by the king’s verbal behavior, which ensures the prosperity and abundance of a society. This notion has exact cognates, both in semantics and syntactical expression, in Indo-Iranian and in Greek poetry, as Watkins shows, citing for the latter literature the *Works and Days*, wherein the fable of the hawk and the nightingale (*Works and Days* 203–12) is explicitly directed to the kings and has as its main concern the contrast between “straight” and “crooked” *dikē*.¹³ Straight *dikē* leads to an ideal state of plenty (*Works and Days* 225–35):

οἳ δὲ <u>δίκα</u> ς ξείνοισι καὶ ἐνδήμοισι διδοῦσιν	225
<u>ἰθείας</u> καὶ μὴ τι παρεκβαίνουσι δικαίου,	
τοῖσι τέθηλε πόλις, λαοὶ δ’ ἀνθεῦσιν ἐν αὐτῇ·	
εἰρήνη δ’ ἀνὰ γῆν κουροτρόφος, οὐδέ ποτ’ αὐτοῖς	
ἀργαλέον πόλεμον τεκμαίρεται εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς·	
οὐδέ ποτ’ <u>ἰθυδίχησι</u> μετ’ ἀνδράσι λιμὸς ὀπηδεῖ	230
οὐδ’ ἄτη, θαλίης δὲ μεμηλότα ἔργα νέμονται.	
τοῖσι φέρει μὲν γαῖα πολὺν βίον, οὔρεσι δὲ δρυῶς	
ἄκρη μὲν τε φέρει βαλάνους, μέσση δὲ μελίσσας·	
εἰροπόκοι δ’ οἶες μαλλοῖς καταβεβρίθασιν	
τίκτουσιν δὲ γυναιῖκες εἰοικότα τέκνα γονεῦσιν	235

But those who give straight judgments to foreigners and fellow-citizens and do not turn aside from justice at all, their city blooms and the people in it flower. For them, Peace, the nurse of the young, is on the earth, and far-seeing Zeus never marks out painful war; nor does famine attend straight-judging men, nor calamity, but they share out in festivities the fruits of the labors they care for. For these the earth bears the means of life in abundance, and on the mountains the oak tree bears acorns on its surface, and bees in its center; their woolly sheep are weighed down by their fleeces; and their wives give birth to children who resemble their parents. [trans. Most 2006]

¹² Watkins 1979, 182. Further on the antiquity of this text: F. Kelly 1976, xv and Henry 1982, 35 (on the relation of Morann to the Vedic figure of Varuna). On the relation between early Irish kings and judges, including Morann, see Wagner 1970, 1–45 and Binchy 1970, 4–16. Note that the Irish instruction is specifically to a foster-son, in the *AM* and elsewhere, a detail identical with the tradition that Cheiron instructed Achilles, Jason, et al. in a type of fosterage. The motif of Achilles’ fosterage is an Indo-European relic, according to Campanile 1981, 32–34.

¹³ Watkins 1979, 183, 192–93.

This opposition of good and bad justice is mirrored in Old Irish instruction poetry, where one is told the many results of *fírbretha* as opposed to *góbretha* (true and false judgments). The results of the latter are often painfully elaborated; the true judgments lead to increased yields of milk, fish, corn, and fair children.¹⁴

Watkins also mentions the other striking appearance of the Ruler's Truth notion in archaic Greek poetry: the words of Odysseus to Penelope in which he details the results of an ideal king's good rule (*Odyssey* 19.106–14):¹⁵

τὴν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς
 ὦ γύναι, οὐκ ἄν τις σε βροτῶν ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν
 νεικέει· ἦ γάρ σευ κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἰκάνει,
 ὥς τέ τευ ἦ βασιλῆος ἀμύμονος, ὅς τε θεοῦδης
 ἀνδράσιν ἐν πολλοῖσι καὶ ἰφθίμοισιν ἀνάσσω
 110
 εὐδικίας ἀνέχῃσι, φέρῃσι δὲ γαῖα μέλαινα
 πυροὺς καὶ κριθάς, βρίθῃσι δὲ δένδρεα καρπῶ,
 τίκτη δ' ἔμπεδα μῆλα, θάλασσα δὲ παρέχῃ ἰχθῦς
 ἐξ εὐηγεσίας, ἀρετῶσι δὲ λαοὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

Then resourceful Odysseus answered her, and said: “Lady, no one among mortals upon the boundless earth could find fault with you, for your fame goes up to the broad heaven, as does the fame of some blameless king, who, with the fear of the gods in his heart, is lord over many valiant men, upholding justice; and the black earth bears wheat and barley, and the trees are laden with fruit, the flocks bring forth young unceasingly, and the sea yields fish, all from his good leading; and the people prosper under him.” [trans. Murray and Dimock 1995]

This passage, apparently a digression in the interview between husband and wife on Ithaca, will turn out to be a key element in Odysseus' revelation. We have seen, then, that Old Irish and Greek instructional poetry—the *Audacht Morainn* and the *Works and Days*—both contain one inherited theme concerning the abundance resulting from the power of a good king, and that the same theme appears in the *Odyssey*. The point that I wish to

¹⁴ See sections 12–21 *AM*, apparently the oldest section in the text, according to F. Kelly 1976, 6–7.

¹⁵ Watkins 1979, 192; cf. F. Kelly 1976, xvii. For evidence concerning the high antiquity of Greek kingship traditions as reflected in the *Odyssey* 19 passage, see Mondt 1980, 203–16; on kingship as a relic institution at the composition of Homeric epic, see Drews 1983, 105–6, 144; on the heritage of Greek kingship, see Detienne 1967, 42–50.

make involves the same spread of attestation, with the substitution of the *Theogony* proem for the *Works and Days* passage.

In *Audacht Morainn*, it is implicit that the *fir flathemon* is verbally expressed by the king. There is evidence, in fact, from the twelfth century that a king actually recited or assented to the proverbial statements and injunctions of a *tecosc* during his inauguration ceremony. It may help us to appreciate the social parallels in the Greek and Irish situations for instruction-poetry if we note that such Irish inaugurations involved the passing of a rod, symbol of sovereignty, from a poet to the new king: the rod thus resembles the *skêptron*, not only in its close connection with kingship, but also in its relation to authoritative poetic speech. The Irish king is certified by the poet; reciprocally, the poet is maintained by the king and tribe. A similar relationship lies behind the proem to the *Theogony*, a poem resembling an inauguration ode for Zeus and detailing (as did Irish odes) the king's genealogy and battle prowess. Hesiod's gift of a *skêptron* from the Muses (*Theogony* 30) is a gift from their father, Zeus, and gets as its recompense the gift of the *Theogony* itself, which authorizes the divine king.¹⁶

Explicitly as well, the *Audacht* presents instructions on the role of speaking in kingship. After discoursing on the prosperity that the Ruler's Truth accomplishes, Morann gives Feradach a string of admonitions (*AM* sect. 55, ed. Kelly):

Apair fris, (a) bad trócar, (b) bad fírión, (c) bad chosmuil, (d) bad chuib-sech, (e) bad fósath, (f) bad eslabar, (g) bad garte, (h) bad fíalainech, (i) bad sessach, (j) bad lessach, (k) bad éitir, (l) bad inric, (m) bad súthnge, (n) bad foruste, (o) bad fírbrethach.

Tell him, let him be (a) merciful, (b) just, (c) impartial, (d) conscientious, (e) firm, (f) generous, (g) hospitable, (h) honourable, (i) stable, (j) beneficent, (k) capable, (l) honest, (m) well-spoken, (n) steady, (o) true-judging.

The final three are of particular interest here: "let him be well-spoken, steady, true-judging." For, semantically, we have here the exact pairing of the Greek phrase *asphaleôs agoreuei*.¹⁷ The notion of true judgment, central to the

¹⁶ On the Irish inauguration ceremonies and other king-rituals, see F. Kelly 1976, 14; Dillon 1973, 1–8; and Byrne 1973, 7–27, esp. 15ff. On the meaning of Hesiod's *skêptron*, see Duban 1980, 7 and Puelma 1972, 94, both of whom also notice the parallel action of poets and kings in the description of the Muse's gifts (*Theogony* 79–103).

¹⁷ The adverb *asphaleôs* is especially important because, in the diction of the *Theogony*, only Gaia and Ouranos bear the adjective form as epithet: as Duban notes (1980, 19), this implies that "the king's 'unerring' pronouncements are the moral safeguard to the universe's physical stability"; he

Hesiodic description of ideal kingship in the *Theogony* passage (cf. especially *Theogony* 85–90), in *AM* immediately follows the phrases concerning speech—as is proper for the ideology of a culture in which tribal king and judge are closely allied.¹⁸

Examples can be multiplied to show that speaking well and truthfully is traditionally important advice in Irish Instruction of Princes. The *Senbríathra Fithail* (“proverbs” of the pagan judge Fithail), another *tecosc* text, has among its formulas the following: *adcota miltenga brithemnacht* (“A sweet tongue begets judgment”). We can note in this formula the association, as in the *Theogony* proem, of the king’s speech with judgment. Furthermore, the word *miltenga*—literally “honey-tongue”—appears to contain the exact notion found in *meilikhios*, a key adjective in the Greek passages in question.¹⁹

The “Battle of Airtech” (*Cath Airtig*) contains the *tecosc* given by Conall Cernach to Cuscraid Mend Macha, as the latter assumes the kingship. After the instructions concerning proper gift-bestowal and assembly-holding, the new king is enjoined as follows:²⁰

parallels the king’s effectiveness in *Odyssey* 19.109–14, a passage that we have already seen is derived from archaic prince-instruction material. Old Irish *foruste*, the word translated here as “steady,” might be further glossed “unmoved because rooted in tradition,” as the noun *forus*, from which the adjective is derived, has particular reference to abstruse knowledge, especially of legal precedents and lore: cf. *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Dublin 1913–76) “F,” col. 373 s.v., sections *b* and *c*. On the importance of such “steadiness” in the context of kingship, cf. the evidence of a third cognate tradition (ancient India) as seen in, e.g., *Rig Veda* 10.173.4, noted by Schlerath 1960, 118. The lack of cognate linguistic expressions for these identical themes in the three traditions cited (Irish, Greek, Indic) should not be taken as proof that the complex of ideas regarding kings developed late and independently in each dialect of Indo-European, as semantic structures are often retained despite surface lexical renewal: cf. Watkins 1981, 764–99, esp. 780, 794.

¹⁸ The *Audacht* presents the ruler not only as possessing the mystical *fir flathemon*, upon which justice is based, but also as setting legal precedents in the matter of fees, obligations, honor-price, and so forth (cf. *AM* sections 47–52). At the same time, the existence of independent judges appears to be acknowledged (cf. section 23, “Let him not exalt any judge unless he knows the true legal precedents,” F. Kelly 1976, 8–9).

¹⁹ On this formula, see Smith 1928, 14. Although *meilikhios* is probably not related to the Greek word for “honey” (*meli*), as Chantraine showed (1937, 169–74), there is no doubt that an association between the two word-groups had developed by the time of the composition of the *Theogony* proem (cf. lines 83–84: the Muses pour dew on the king’s tongue and his words pour forth *meilikha*). Compare also the Homeric description of Nestor’s voice at *Iliad* 1.249, a poetic detail that may be of Indo-European date, on which see Schmitt 1967, 256. Finally, on the association of honey and true speech, see Scheinberg 1979; and on the symbolic value of honey in the *Theogony* in relation to speech, see Pucci 1977, 19–21.

²⁰ Best 1916, 173. The obscure word *tethrai* may mean “paragons”: cf. *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (above, note 16) s.v. 2 *tethra*. Compare the similar injunction, also in a context of judging, contained in *Tecosca Cormaic* (“Instructions of Cormac”): *eolas cech berla*, “knowledge of each language,” is one of the essentials for the tribe’s welfare (text in Sullivan 1983, 343c13).

Bat eolai in gech berlae ar narbat ainfis i nnach dán conruidfe a fritacra friut.

Bat fíren fírbrethach cen forbrisiu n-indsciu etir tethrai trén (ocus) trúg.

Be skilled in every tongue, so thou be not ignorant in any art that one will speak in argument with thee. Be just and righteous in judgment, not supressing speech between the *tethra* of the strong and the weak.

As in *Audacht Morainn*, instruction on speech is immediately followed by advice concerning judgment (with the same word used: *fírbrethach* = “true-judging”). It should be pointed out that in both the *Audacht* and the *Battle of Airtech*, the instructions to the king are embedded in a narrative, as I believe is also the case in the *Odyssey*. In my final Irish example, the embedded *tecosc* is less well integrated with its narrative, a sign that the story-teller is, indeed, borrowing from another genre to fill out his tale. In a section of the *Wasting Sickness of Cú Chulainn* (*Serlige Con Culainn*), the hero instructs his foster-son Lugaid, who has been chosen as next king of Tara by an unusual bull-feast divination ceremony (278–82):²¹

26. *Ní fresnesea co labur.*

Ní aisnéisea co glórach.

Ní fuirse.

Ní chuitbe.

Ní faithchithir senóri.

Be not haughty in contradiction.

Be not loud in telling.

Do not play the buffoon.

Do not mock.

Do not threaten old men.

This portion of Cú Chulainn’s instructions centers, once more, on the proper verbal behavior for kings. Although the contexts differ in the *Wasting Sickness* and the *Odyssey* passages, both Cú Chulainn and Odysseus instruct their young prince interlocutors to speak in a respectful, restrained manner. In Greek terms, this means having *aidôs*; this brings us to the second theme shared by the *Odyssey* and *Theogony* passages with which we began.

²¹ Dillon 1975, 9; translation in Dillon 1951, 57, who notes uncertainties *ad loc.* Once again, the addressee is a foster-son; cf. n. 11 above.

Aidōs is an important topic of Prince Instruction, as can be seen more clearly when we turn from the shame culture of ancient Ireland to that of archaic Greece. Hesiod's *Works and Days*, as we have seen, is an explicitly instructional composition. It is significant, given this context, that the poem dramatizes the negative exemplum of the Fifth Age in terms of *aidōs*: the era is to be marked by a complete failure of reciprocal relationships (*Works and Days* 182–91) usually observed between family members, *xeinoi*, and parties to oaths (*Works and Days* 192–94):

δίκη δ' ἐν χερσὶ καὶ αἰδῶς
οὐκ ἔσται, βλάψει δ' ὁ κακὸς τὸν ἀρείονα φῶτα
μύθοισι σκολιοῖς ἐνέπων, ἐπὶ δ' ὄρκον ὁμεῖται.

Justice will be in their hands, and reverence will not exist,
but the bad man will harm the superior one, speaking
with crooked discourses, and he will swear an oath upon them.
[trans. Most 2006]

Aidōs is clearly a matter of proper verbal behavior here; the man who lacks this quality speaks “crooked words” in harming his betters. The description of the Fifth Age closes with another reference to *aidōs*, this time in the symbolic departure from earth of the goddess, accompanied by Nemesis (*Works and Days* 199–200). Finally, before proceeding to the specific instructions of the poem's latter part, Hesiod directs to his brother Perses a short exhortation concerning *aidōs* (*Works and Days* 317–19):

αἰδῶς δ' οὐκ ἀγαθὴ κεχρημένον ἄνδρα κομίζει,
αἰδῶς, ἥ τ' ἄνδρας μέγα σίνεται ἡδ' ὀνίνησιν
αἰδῶς τοι πρὸς ἀνολβίῃ, θάρσος δὲ πρὸς ὄλβῳ.

Shame is not good at providing for a needy man—shame, which
greatly harms men and also benefits them: for shame goes along
with poverty, and self-confidence goes along with wealth. [trans.
Most 2006]

In contrast to the preceding portions of the poem, in which *aidōs* is a virtue, these lines present the other side of the notion, by a particularly Hesiodic splitting of the abstract qualities into “good” and “bad” (cf. the section on Eris, *Works and Days* 11–26; also, Nemesis, at *Theogony* 223, is a pain for mortals, whereas at *Works and Days* 200, it is implicitly good). But this contrast is not a contradiction: the problem arises when some people

have *aidôs* while others lack it; the very existence of the notion means that it can be used for good or ill (just as an oath “does harm” to humans in general, when someone swears falsely: *Theogony* 231–32). Hesiod is not urging Perses to dispense with *aidôs*; to the contrary, his discussion ends with a reference to the disastrous consequences of “shamelessness” (*anaideiê*) overpowering *aidôs* (*Works and Days* 324ff.); the gods diminish the life and wealth of that man who gets *olbos* with violence. In the light of this conclusion, *Works and Days* 319, αἰδῶς τοι πρὸς ἀνολβίῃ, θάρσος δὲ πρὸς ὄλβῳ, should be read as a bitterly ironic piece of advice: “*aidôs* for poverty, boldness for wealth.” Hesiod is on the side of *aidôs*; boldness (*tharsos*) is synonymous in this context with “taking *olbos* by force” in line 321, the short-term worldly success with long-term disadvantages. This portion of the *Works and Days*, then, is just as much prince-instruction on *aidôs* as is the preceding description of the Fifth Age.

The poetic genre that I have posited as the source of the similar passages from the *Theogony* proem and from *Odyssey* Book 8 is continued after Hesiod’s time in the instructional poetry of Theognis of Megara.²² It should not be surprising, then, to find that the theme of proper *aidôs* bulks large in the later tradition. Even though Theognidean poetry is addressed to the polis of Megara, through the foil-figure Cynus, the connection with the old tradition of prince-instruction is maintained through such formal characteristics of Theognidean poetry as the exhortations to remember (e.g., Theognis 27–30), the aphoristic style (e.g., 143–54), and, over all, the communication situation (an old man advises a young one) that frames the poetry.

Just as in the *Works and Days*, *aidôs* in Theognis’ verse is conspicuous by being absent. Compare with *Works and Days* 192–94 this description of the *present* day in Theognis (289–93):²³

Nūn δὲ τὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν κακὰ γίνεται ἐσθλὰ κακοῖσιν
 ἀνδρῶν ἡγέονται δ’ ἐκτραπέλοισι νόμοις·
 αἰδῶς μὲν γὰρ ὄλωλεν, ἀναιδείη δὲ καὶ ὕβρις
 νικήσασα δίκην γῆν κατὰ πᾶσαν ἔχει.

²² See Friedländer 1913. My view of the poetic relationship among Cynus, Theognis, and Megara owes much to the work of Nagy 1982a.

²³ The opposition *aidôs* vs. *hubris* is traditional in Homeric diction: Cheyns 1967, esp. 9–10. Cheyns further compares Eurymachus with Thersites, another reviler of kings: both can be said to embody *hubris*.

Now what the noble consider vices are deemed virtues by the base, and they rejoice in perverted ways [laws?]. For respect is lost and shameless outrage, having overcome justice, prevails in all the land. [trans. Gerber 1999]

More important for the present question, in Theognis as well, *aidôs* is regularly associated with proper speech. The famous lines promising immortality to Cynrus conclude with a complaint in which the boy's lack of *aidôs* is equated precisely with the wrong verbal behavior, deceptive speech (253–54):

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ὀλίγησ παρὰ σεῦ οὐ τυγχάνω αἰδοῦς,
ἀλλ' ὥσπερ μικρὸν παῖδα λόγοις μ' ἀπατᾶις.

And yet I do not meet with a slight respect from you, but you deceive me with your words, as if I were a small child. [trans. Gerber 1999]

In exchange for immortality, Theognis' poetry elicits the properly mature use of respectful speech, bestowing a gift of words on the listener in two ways: externally (through *kleos*, 245–46) and internally through an instruction in proper speech.

The connection between speech and *aidôs* is made even more clearly in lines 83–86:²⁴

Τούτους οὐ χ' εὔροις διζήμενος οὐδ' ἐπὶ πάντας
ἀνθρώπους, οὓς ναῦς μὴ μία πάντας ἄγει,
οἷσιν ἐπὶ γλώσση. τε καὶ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἔπεστιν
αἰδῶς, οὐδ' αἰσχρὸν χρῆμ' ἐπὶ κέρδος ἄγει.

Not even if you searched among all men would you find so many that a single ship could not carry them all, men on whose tongue and eyes there is a sense of shame and whom profit does not lead to a disgraceful act. [trans. Gerber 1999]

Finally, the similarity of diction between the lines just quoted and the following piece of Theognidean instruction justifies us in treating as nearly synonymous *aidôs* and *to meilikhon* (365–66):

²⁴ Lines 85–86 exhibit the traditional association of *aidôs* and sight, on which see Gould 1973, 88 n. 74. Compare also the role of sight in both *Theogony* 85 and *Odyssey* 8.173, in which the respectful “looking-on” is generated by *aidôs*.

Ἵσχε νόφ, γλώσσης δὲ τὸ μείλιχον αἰὲν ἐπέστω
 δειλῶν τοι τελέθει καρδίη ὄξυτέρη.

Hold back on your thoughts, but let there always be sweetness on
 your tongue; a heart that is too quick to show emotions is assur-
 edly a mark of the base. [trans. Gerber 1999]

Thus, Theognis is operating with the same concepts and poetic diction as Homer and Hesiod: recall the recurring phrase *aidôî meilikhiêî*, which joins the two concepts that are complementary in Theognis, each concept having a special association with speech.²⁵

We have seen so far that *aidôs* is a proper topic for instructional poetry, as both the *Works and Days* and Theognis show; that *aidôs* has a special association with speech; and that there is an established traditional diction surrounding instruction on *aidôs*. The relevance of these points to the discussion of *Odyssey* 8.166–77 and *Theogony* 79–93 should be clear: in both of the passages *aidôs* arises precisely in the context of a speech-act, one which involves, explicitly, an audience and a speaker.

Now the dative of manner, *aidôî meilikhiêî*, has long been seen to function differently in each passage: in *Odyssey* 8.172 it certainly describes the speaker's behavior, whereas in *Theogony* 92 it describes audience reaction. To my mind, this is simply a powerful confirmation of the essentially reciprocal quality of *aidôs*, not a mistake on the part of an adapting poet, as critics hunting the "original" passage would have it.²⁶ As J. P. Gould has noted, *aidôs* is one of many Greek words "where reciprocity of usage implies reciprocity of behavior and attitude in the situation of which the word is used: the feeling of *aidôs*, we may say, is common to both parties in the encounter, or ... characteristic of the encounter itself."²⁷

It is easy to see how a speaker uses *aidôs*—in knowing when and how to speak. At *Odyssey* 8.166–77, Odysseus upbraids Euryalus precisely because the younger man has spoken without *aidôs*. Odysseus then goes on to

²⁵ The phrase *aidôî meilikhiêî* thus resembles formulaic phrases of the type *aithomenon pur*, in which the adjective expresses the essential quality of the noun. In light of the semantics of *aidôs* (quintessentially reciprocal), I suggest that *meilikhios* (etymology unknown; see n. 18 above) is related to the IE root **mei-* (cf. Lat. *munus*, Skt. *Mitra*), the semantics of which are analyzed by Benveniste 1966a, 315–26, esp. 322–23.

²⁶ Cf. von Erffa 1937, 46: he claims Homer is the original because *Theogony* 92 is unusual in its use of the dative. Interpretation varies according to how critics assign *aidôs* at *Theogony* 92: to the king or to the audience; Neitzel 1977, 39 summarizes earlier views.

²⁷ Gould 1973, 87; further on the reciprocal quality of *aidôs*: Turpin 1980.

exhibit the quality himself in deftly turning a personal attack into a general comment that yet has a pointed, hidden message for the young prince. This same episode on Phaeacia can help us to understand how the audience in the speech-act, the *laoi*, show *aidôs* (as the Hesiodic description says they do). At *Odyssey* 7.69–72, the queen, Arete, is described:

ὥς κείνη περὶ κῆρι τετίμηται τε καὶ ἔστιν
ἔκ τε φίλων παίδων ἔκ τ' αὐτοῦ Ἀλκινόοιο
καὶ λαῶν, οἳ μὲν ῥα θεὸν ὥς εἰσορόωντες
δειδέχεται μῦθοισιν, ὅτε στείχησ' ἀνὰ ἄστυ.

So heartily is she honored, and has ever been, by her children
and by Alcinous himself and by the people, who look upon her as
upon a goddess, and greet her as she goes through the city. [trans.
Murray and Dimock 1995]

It obviously shares the Homeric and Hesiodic motif of “looking on one as a god.” The reference to greeting with words (*deidekhatai muthoisin*) contains the same idea as *Theogony* 91 *hilaskontai aidôi meilikhiêi*: the *laoi*, inspired by *aidôs*, know how and when to make their requests. Once again, speech and *aidôs* are closely related; the phrase *aidôi meilikhiêi* refers to both the form and the content of speech, and is an ellipsis for “*aidôs*, which expresses itself in *epea meilikhia*.”²⁸

A consistent association in Greek poetry between *aidôs* and kings is further evidence that instruction concerning *aidôs* belongs in discourse between princes and advisors. Witness the regular collocation of *aidoios* with *basileus* (e.g., *Theogony* 80 above).²⁹ Moreover, the link between *aidôs* and kingship is explicit in the *Hymn to Demeter*, as shown in Metaneira’s words to the disguised goddess (*Hymn to Demeter* 213–15):

Χαῖρε γυναῖ, ἐπεὶ οὐ σε κακῶν ἄπ' ἑόλπα τοκήων
ἔμμεναι, ἀλλ' ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ τοι πρόπει ὄμμασιν αἰδῶς
καὶ χάρις, ὥς εἴ πέο τε θεμιστοπόλων βασιλῆων.

²⁸ *Meilikhios* most commonly modifies *epea*: Cunliffe 1963, 260; cf. the scholiast’s comment at *Theogony* 92, that the adjective is an epithet of *audê*: DiGregorio 1975 *ad loc.*

²⁹ *Xenoi* and *parthenoi* are the only other social groups regularly associated with the adjective: see Gould 1973, 87–88.

“Greetings, lady, for I do not expect you come from low parents, but ones of standing; your eyes have a striking modesty and charm, as might come from lawgiver princes.” [trans. West 2003a]

A good example of the reciprocal nature of this *aidôs* occurs at *Iliad* 10.237–39. “Pick the best companion,” says Agamemnon to Diomedes, “and do not yield to *aidôs* and pick the worse, even though he be kinglier”:

μηδὲ σύ γ' αἰδόμενος σῆσι φρεσὶ τὸν μὲν ἄρειώ
καλλείπειν, σὺ δὲ χεῖρον' ὁπάσσειαι αἰδοῖ εἴκων
ἐς γενεὴν ὀρώων, μηδ' εἰ βασιλεύτερός ἐστιν.

The king is implicitly deserving of *aidôs* and possessor of it. In this way, we can align the complementary roles of *aidôs* as follows:³⁰

<i>aidôs</i> —of the sender	<i>aidôs</i> —of the receiver
<i>Odyssey</i> 8.172 (speaker)	<i>Theogony</i> 92 (<i>laos</i> vs. king)
<i>HHDem.</i> 214–15 (kings)	<i>Iliad</i> 10.237–39 (prince vs. king)

Agamemnon's words to Diomedes, by their tone and in their dramatic context, make clear that *aidôs* is not just associated with kings, but also a fit subject on which to instruct young kings, such as Diomedes. Homeric epic offers other episodes in which there is similar mention of *aidôs* but no explicit reference to the status of the respective speakers and listeners; on close examination, these episodes, too, share the characteristic situation of prince-instruction (old adviser to young prince). The Embassy of *Iliad* 9, for instance, can be viewed as an extended dramatization of prince-instruction, with Phoenix holding the central role. The old man's instructions concerning the *Litai* conclude with the advice to practice *aidôs* (*Iliad* 9.508–9):

ὃς μὲν τ' αἰδέσεται κούρας Διὸς ἄσπον ἰούσας,
τὸν δὲ μέγ' ὤνησαν καὶ τ' ἔκλυον εὐχομένοισ'

Now him who will respect the daughters of Zeus, when they draw near, him they greatly benefit, and hear him when he prays ...
[trans. Murray and Wyatt 1999]

³⁰ For this model of the speech-event, see Jakobson 1960, 353. For the following analysis of *Odyssey* 8 and *Odyssey* 19, I rely on Jakobson's distinction of code and message as constituent factors in any speech-event.

(Note that Ajax's speech concludes on the same notion, with a call for *aidôs*, directed towards the *hetairoi* this time: *Iliad* 9.640.) Some episodes reverse the direction of communication but nevertheless focus on the theme of *aidôs*. One particularly interesting example is at *Odyssey* 3.96–97, where the young prince Telemachus addresses Nestor, urging him to dispense with respectful reticence and to tell him straight out about Odysseus. Telemachus' words contain a verbal transformation of the key noun phrase discussed above, *aidôs meilikhiê*:

μηδέ τί μ' αἰδόμενος μείλίσσῃσθε μῆδ' ἐλεαίρων,
ἀλλ' εὖ μοι κατάλεξον ὅπως ἦν τῆσας ὀπωπῆς.

And do not out of consideration or pity for me speak soothing words, but tell me truly what evidence you came upon. [trans. Murray and Dimock 1995]

Nestor, as a king, possesses *aidôs*, which he exercises in his manner of speaking. We recall, also, that Nestor is more than just a careful speaker concerned with the content of his talk; in Homeric epic he qualifies as the ideal speaker, whose words “flow forth sweeter than honey” (*Iliad* 1.249):

τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ γλώσσης μέλιτος γλυκίων ῥέεν αὐδὴ

... he from whose tongue speech flowed sweeter than honey.
[trans. Murray and Wyatt 1999]

Compare *Theogony* 84 on a king's speech:

τοῦ δ' ἔπε' ἐκ στόματος ῥεῖ μείλιχα

his words flow soothingly from his mouth. [trans. Most 2006]

In addition, Nestor as an ideally long-lived king, who survives three generations, is constantly seen as instructing the rest of the Achaeans, from Agamemnon to Patroclus. We may therefore characterize the ideal Homeric king as both practitioner of the genre of prince-instruction and exemplar of its precepts. Finally, Nestor's dramatic role in the *Iliad* is to reconcile Agamemnon and Achilles: in other words, to solve a *neikos* in the *agora*.³¹

³¹ On Nestor as ideal king: Detienne 1967, 73 n. 133; on the *Iliad* theme of *neikos* in the *agora*: Havelock 1966, 70 and Nagy 1999b, 311–13.

this underlies his actions from the mediating speech in Book 1 (254–84) to his interview with Patroclus in Book 11.

It appears, then, that we can find in Homeric epic not only references to a king's proper behavior and perquisites, but also dramatization of what, in the *Theogony* description of ideal kings, is merely abstract description. In the latter, kings are said to prompt *aidôs*, speak well and with powerful effect, and solve *neikea*; in the former, they actually *do* so. In fact, the *Iliad* in particular can be seen as a poem almost wholly about kingship and its abuse.³² But, as I shall show now, the *Odyssey* as well has much to do with the theme of kingship, more than is generally acknowledged by critics who dwell on the adventure sequence to the neglect of the larger “frame” narrative of Books 1–8 and 13–24. We must bear in mind Odysseus' kingly status in order to appreciate the full resonances of the portions of the poem in which he plays beggar. In the same way, in Book 8, it is crucial that the audience recall Odysseus' status. Only then does one perceive that Odysseus is signaling his kingship to the audience within the poem, the Phaeacians. He does so by means of prince-instruction to Euryalus. Presumably, an audience familiar with archaic Greek compositions in the genre—such as the *Kheirônos hupothêkai*—would delight in Homer's creation of dramatic ironies throughout this scene. For Odysseus the stranger yet speaks like a king, to those who know.

We have seen that Odysseus' words to Euryalus contain two themes prominent in prince-instructions elsewhere, which account for the presence of similar phraseology. But the dramatic context itself in *Odyssey* 8 marks Odysseus' discourse for what it is. Stanford, noting the apparent digression in the speech to Euryalus, compares it to a “short sermon on the diversity of gifts” (adducing 1 *Corinthians* 12:4ff.) and his emphasis on the authoritative tone of the speech is correct: Odysseus is delivering the archaic Greek equivalent of quoting St. Paul, using the topic and tone of traditional instructional poetry.³³

³² The abuse of kingship in the *Iliad* is specifically related to Agamemnon's lack of *aidôs*; cf. *Iliad* 1.22–24 (his failure to honor Chryses) and *Iliad* 1.149 (Achilles' charge of *anaideia*). On the wider connections of this *Iliad* theme (the inferior king vs. superior warrior), see Davidson 1980, 197–202. Irish tradition also includes a number of tales in which the generating circumstance is a king's faulty behavior or failure to observe taboos (*geasa*) attached to kingship; see Draak 1959, 653.

³³ Stanford 1959, vol. 1 *ad loc.* In fact, Odysseus in the *Iliad* is a regular sermonizer about kingship in particular: of the four examples of gnomic verses that mention the role of *basileus* in the *Iliad*, Odysseus speaks three (*Iliad* 2.196, 2.204ff., 19.182–83; the fourth is by Calchas, *Iliad* 1.80); for the collection, see Ahrens 1937, 12ff. Only in the *Odyssey* are Odysseus' pronouncements disguised.

What is explicit in *Theogony* 86ff.—that it is the king who speaks faultlessly, winning *aidôs* and solving a *neikos* in the *agora* thereby—is acted out in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus makes a general statement to his opponent (8.176–77), whom the poet has already characterized as being the best looking of the nobles (8.116). Although the contrasting character in Odysseus' short speech, the anonymous man to whom the gods have given the gift of speech, appears to be simply a foil, we must see that it is none other than *Odysseus himself*. This is disguised self-reference.³⁴ Odysseus does not have to say that he (unlike Euryalus) can speak well and with *aidôs*: he demonstrates this in his reply. If Odysseus conceals the reference to the identity of the good speaker, we recall that at this point in Scheria he still masks his own identity. The two hidden facts are significantly intertwined. Odysseus the faultless *speaker* is Odysseus son of Laertes, *king* of Ithaca.

In other details as well, the *Odyssey* passage offers a dramatic version of the abstract king-ideal of the *Theogony* (again, this is not to say that Homer “dramatizes” a pre-existing text of Hesiod, but that both use common themes in different modes). For the contest between Odysseus and Euryalus is actually described by Alcinoos as a *neikos* during an *agôn* (8.238–39); the poet calls it a *neikos* as well (8.158 *neikese*). By winning, Odysseus acts to solve the *neikos*.³⁵ Note that *agôn* is a formulaic variant for *agora* in epic diction, and that the scene of the contest has in fact been described twice already in Book 8 as the *agora* (8.109, 156).

Not only are all the terms of the *Theogony* description thus acted out (speaking, *aidôs*, solving *neikos* in the *agora*); the poet of the *Odyssey* has prepared his audience to view the contest with Euryalus as being related to kingship. What I have called the “looking on” motif, prominent in the two passages under discussion (*Theogony* 85, *Odyssey* 8.173) is also used to introduce Telemachus' arrival at the Ithacan *agora* and Odysseus' own arrival at the Phaeacians' *agora* (*Odyssey* 2.10–13 and 8.16–19):³⁶

³⁴ Cf. Berres 1975, 134, who views Odysseus' self-reference as evidence for an adapting *Odyssey*-poet's desire for self-portraiture. Since Odysseus, the king, refers to himself, the arguments of West and Wilamowitz (that the *Odyssey* description does not fit a king, therefore Hesiod is prior) are not valid: cf. West 1966, 183; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1916, 478–79. Also insupportable is Solmsen's contention (1954, 10) that the *Odyssey* passage leaves out all reference to kings (a point used to argue Homeric priority). Ancient critics, conscious of social roles, noted Odysseus' kingly status: the scholiast to *Theogony* 86 (DiGregorio 1975) selects Odysseus as the prime example of a king (citing *Odyssey* 4.693) to elucidate the Hesiod passage on ideal kingship.

³⁵ See Martin 1983, 65–76 on the Greek notion of contest as solution to difficulties.

³⁶ The primary and most extended expression of this “looking-on” motif comes at *Iliad* 12.312 (the people look on Glaucus and Sarpedon as gods). It is part of a larger theme, that of the “honor

βῆ ῥ' ἵμεν εἰς ἀγορὴν, παλάμη δ' ἔχε χάλκεον ἔγχος,
 οὐκ οἶος, ἅμα τῷ γε δύω κύνες ἀργοὶ ἔποντο.
 θεσπεσίην δ' ἄρα τῷ γε χάριν κατέχευεν Ἀθήνη·
τὸν δ' ἄρα πάντες λαοὶ ἐπερχόμενον θεῖντο.

Telemachus went to the assembly, holding in his hand a spear of bronze—not alone, for along with him two swift dogs followed; and wondrous was the grace that Athene shed upon him, and all the people marveled at him as he came. [trans. Murray and Dimock 1995, slightly modified]

καρπαλίμως δ' ἔμπληντο βροτῶν ἀγοραὶ τε καὶ ἔδραι
 ἀγρομένων πολλοὶ δ' ἄρα θηήσαντο ἰδόντες
υἱὸν Λαέρταο δαΐφρονα. τῷ δ' ἄρ' Ἀθήνη
 θεσπεσίην κατέχευε χάριν κεφαλῇ τε καὶ ὤμοις.

Speedily the place of assembly and the seats were filled with gathering men. And many marveled at the sight of the wise son of Laertes, for wondrous was the grace that Athene shed upon his head and shoulders. [trans. Murray and Dimock 1995]

In the first passage, the context is concerned with the uncertainty as to whether the young prince will be king of Ithaca and gain a permanent place on the throne of his father, which he now temporarily occupies (2.14). Interestingly, his speaking ability is singled out for mention as the characteristic that most marks him for the position of king. Antinoos says (*Odyssey* 1.384–87):

Τηλέμαχ', ἦ μάλα δὴ σε διδάσκουσιν θεοὶ αὐτοὶ
 ὑσαγόρην τ' ἔμεναι καὶ θαρσαλέως ἀγορεύειν.

of gods”: one is honored (*Iliad* 9.155), repaid (*Iliad* 9.302–3), welcomed (*Iliad* 22.435) like “a god.” Other instances of the theme: at *Iliad* 22.394 Hector is prayed to “like a god”; at *Odyssey* 7.11—a scene preparatory to the passage under discussion—Alcinoos, clearly a king, is said to be heard “like a god” by the *dēmos*. Note that, in the two passages cited in the text, the pouring of *kharis* by Athena is closely associated with the audience’s favorable reaction to the figures of Telemachus and Odysseus. This accords precisely with the association of *kharis* and *aidōs* in *Hymn to Demeter* 214–15, quoted above: the possessor of *kharis* transmits *aidōs* (and therefore receives it also). Finally, let me cite Pindar *Olympian* 1.30: Χάρις δ', ἅπερ ἅπαντα τεύχει τὰ μεῖλιχα θνατοῖς, in order to indicate the traditional nature of the dictional equivalences among terms which describe reciprocal behavior:

aidōs + *kharis* (*Hymn to Demeter* 214–15)

kharis + *ta meilikha* (*Olympian* 1.30)

to meilikhon + *aidōs* (*Theognis* 85–86, 365)

aidōi meilikhiēi (*Theogony* 92, *Odyssey* 8.172).

μη σέ γ' ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκῃ βασιλῆα Κρονίων
ποιήσσειεν, ὅ τοι γενεῇ πατρώϊόν ἐστιν.

“Telemachus, surely the gods themselves are teaching you a lofty style, and to speak with boldness. May the son of Cronus never make you king in seagirt Ithaca, which thing is by birth your heritage.” [trans. Murray and Dimock 1995]

So too in Scheria there is the possibility that the new arrival will knock the islanders out of contention and become Nausicaa's husband. The poet plays with the resonances of a folklore motif, the royal marriage test.³⁷ Royal marriage seems far from connected to the topic of prince-instruction, but as it turns out, in the *Odyssey* marriage and kingship have everything to do with one another. Penelope and the rule of Ithaca are indissociable. I pointed out earlier that *Odyssey* 19 contains an extended fragment of the Ruler's Truth ideology, in form resembling something directly taken from prince-instruction poetry. Who gives this apparent digression within the poem? None other than the disguised king again, Odysseus.

Both in his talk with Penelope and in his reply to Euryalus, Odysseus allows his interlocutor to know that he is the king—provided the interlocutor recognizes the genre in which Odysseus is speaking.³⁸ In Book 8, he seals his coded signal with a clear sign consisting of a spectacular discus-throw. As if to contrast with the final revelation of his status, Odysseus begins the throw while still wrapped in his *pharos* (8.186); the throw literally lowers the status of the Phaeacians as it reveals Odysseus' own: they cower to the ground beneath the flung discus (190), which flies “past all the *sēmata*.” While the discus surpasses these “distinguishing marks,” the result of the throw is *itself* a *sēma*, one which Athena validates in person with a proclamation containing a double meaning (*Odyssey* 8.195–98):

καί κ' ἀλαός τοι, ξεῖνε, διακρίνειε τὸ σῆμα
ἀμφαφύων, ἐπεὶ οὐ τι μεμιγμένον ἐστὶν ὁμίλῳ,

³⁷ Such resonances were certainly possible for an ancient audience: witness the multiform, attested in cult, in which Odysseus competes in a foot-race to win Penelope and makes dedications to Athena for his victory; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 3.12.4, discussed in Detienne 1981, 24–25. Further on such folktale elements in the competition for Penelope: Hoelscher 1978.

³⁸ Odysseus' parallel role as poet, manipulating genres of discourse, once more makes it easy to lose sight of the artful composer Homer, who puts the genre of instruction-poetry into Odysseus' mouth for purposes of the wider composition. The layering evident in Odysseus' speech at *Odyssey* 8.167ff. is thus another piece of evidence (like Odysseus' lies and his adventure-telling) for the theory that the *Odyssey's* overriding concern is with the practice of narrative per se: see Todorov 1977, 53–65.

ἀλλὰ πολὺ πρῶτον. σὺ δὲ θάρσει τόνδε γ' ἄεθλον
οὔ τις Φαιήκων τόν γ' ἵξεται οὐδ' ὑπερήσει.

“Even a blind man, stranger, could distinguish this mark, groping for it with his hands, for it is in no way confused in the throng of the others, but is far the first. You may take confidence from this throw, at any rate: no one of the Phaeacians will reach this, or surpass it.” [trans. Murray and Dimock 1995]

The key to the riddle is contained in an unusual catachresis, for only here (196) in Homeric poetry is *homilos* used to refer to inanimate objects rather than to a throng of persons, usually warriors. The significance of the usage becomes clearer when we note that *homilos* can be used to describe the spectators at a contest (as at *Iliad* 23.804, 813) and actually is used of the Phaeacian onlookers in this very contest at *Odyssey* 8.109.

Athena’s brief *epinikion* commemorating Odysseus’ throw can be decoded to mean that Odysseus stands out from the “crowd” just as his discus is “not mixed in with the *homilos*.” The message of Athena is exactly that which Odysseus transmits concerning himself (the “speaker”) in his words to Euryalus: cf. 8.172, μετὰ δὲ πρόπει ἀγορόμενοισιν. “Even a blind man” can distinguish Odysseus’ sign, says Athena; the statement is ironically half-fulfilled soon after the contest when Demodocus, the blind bard, tells the story of Odysseus in the Trojan Horse. but does not recognize the person who requested the tale, Odysseus (8.487ff.). This “sign” that has “surpassed all others,” then, is iconic for Odysseus’ status as surpassing speaker, athlete, and king.

In Book 19, a *sêma* again follows Odysseus’ coded use of prince-instruction in the conversation with Penelope. This time the sign that alerts the audience to the presence of other coded messages is the brooch that Penelope recognizes from Odysseus’ description.³⁹ Following Nagy’s recent demonstration that poetry itself can be a *sêma* in epic, I now suggest that in both the *Odyssey* 8 and 19 episodes, Odysseus is delivering *two* *semata*: those designated as such (the discus-throw, the brooch) and the undesignated use of a genre of discourse as a code to his listener.⁴⁰

³⁹ On the ironies of this entire scene see Fenik 1974, 20–25; on Odysseus’ clothes as a coded message, see Nagy 1983, 36–37.

⁴⁰ On poetry as *sêma*: Nagy 1983, 51. The general symmetry between the Phaeacian and Ithacan recognition scenes is outlined by Fenik 1974, 53–55.

In Scheria, only keen-minded Alcinoos succeeds in interpreting the sign, though the audience of the poem appreciates its meaning: it requires a king to know one. In Book 19, suspense arises from the use of the hidden *sêma*: will Penelope accomplish the task of reading Odysseus' genre? But the queen, clever woman, king's proper wife (herself *like* a good king: *Odyssey* 19.108–9), must no doubt have already understood the speaker for what he is—not beggar but king, instructor of princes.⁴¹

⁴¹ A shorter version of this paper was first delivered at the American Philological Association meeting in Philadelphia (December 1982). Useful suggestions for the initial publication came from the anonymous *TAPA* referees and Gregory Nagy, whom I thank. On the early recognition of Odysseus by Penelope (hinted at in the final paragraph) see now Vlahos 2007.

PULP EPIC

THE *CATALOGUE* AND THE *SHIELD*¹

“All normal people need both classics and trash.” George Bernard Shaw’s adage, comforting to those whose personal preferences lean toward rap music rather than *Rigoletto*, can also apply to the professional realm. Trash and classics go hand in hand. Mutually self-defining as these are, however, one rarely finds them brought together in the same critical discourse, any more than one finds them embodied in a single writer (apart from rarities like the noir novelist Raymond Chandler, who took top marks in the Civil Service Classics exam of 1907).²

In this paper I propose to re-read a problematic classical (if not classic) text, the *Shield of Heracles* attributed to Hesiod, by using a “trash aesthetic.” Explicit reference to this aesthetic has increasingly played a role in the analysis of a wide range of artistic productions and cultural forms, from trailer parks to New Jersey hairstyles to Bill Clinton’s girlfriends. Film bulks largest in the aesthetic consideration of trash, and vocabulary and examples from movies will be useful in this analysis. The subcategory of trash analysis centering on verbal narrative (called “pulp theory” after the novels—like Chandler’s—once thought to be worth less than the cheap paper they were printed on) will also prove helpful.³

The discovery of a likeness between pulp film and written narrative is, of course, nothing new, as the media have always been symbiotic in production as in reception. Brendan Behan tells of Borstal Boys passing the time in

¹ Originally published in *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Constructions and Reconstructions*, ed. R. Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 153–75.

² On the formative influence of Chandler’s classical education at Dulwich College, London, see Hiney 1997, 15–16, 21, 24 and Bloom 1996, 48–49.

³ Useful introductions centered on film are Cartmell et al. 1997; Schaefer 1999; Mendik and Harper 2000. For the trash mode in literary analysis, see Hawkins 1990.

custody by telling what they called “pictures”—that is, stories they could all piece together from remembered gangster films.⁴ At another level, Quentin Tarantino’s brilliant trash masterpiece *Pulp Fiction* asserts the essential likeness of trashy novels and trashy films. This exploration of the trashiest piece of ancient Greek heroic poetry is in homage to him.⁵

Who says the *Aspis* (as I will call the poem, to distinguish it from the description of Achilles’ shield in the *Iliad*) is trash? Just about every Hellenist who bothers to mention it. The poem has the worst reputation accorded any piece of surviving hexameter poetry. Albin Lesky says: “A poet of limited gifts has tried to elevate and ennoble a standard feature of epic but has merely defaced and distorted it.”⁶ For Thalmann, “the poem’s execution is not worthy of the underlying conception,” though he grants that even as mediocre a poet as the composer of the *Aspis* could milk some meaning out of the standard technique of scenic juxtaposition.⁷ Professors Barron and Easterling in the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* call the *Aspis* “a weak and muddled account of the fight between Herakles and Cycnus,” which “lacks the strength and wit of Hesiod” and “depends for its effects on sheer accumulation of detail, preferably detail of a sensational kind.”⁸ On the whole, they conclude, it is clumsily adapted from Homer. Martin West, in the second and third editions of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, concurs: “Disproportion is characteristic of the work; the Homeric apparatus of arming, divine machination, brave speeches, and long similes is lavished on an encounter in which two blows are struck in all. Parts of the description of the shield betray a taste for the macabre.”⁹

For nineteenth-century appreciations, we can turn to Paley who in turn approves the colorful views of Welcker’s nemesis, Colonel Mure. “Wild and fantastic, without originality, and turgid without dignity” is the Colonel’s judgment; “not only is the poetical law against rude collisions of heterogeneous elements completely set at naught, but the text is often, to all appearances, purposely so disposed, that the same line contains the conclusion of one and the commencement of another image of the most offensively opposite character. The joyous is suddenly converted into the pathetic, the

⁴ Behan 1959, 334.

⁵ On the development of Tarantino’s aesthetic, see Woods 1996.

⁶ Lesky 1966, 104.

⁷ Thalmann 1984, 62–64.

⁸ Barron and Easterling 1989, 62.

⁹ West 1970, 511. The view is repeated in his article for the third edition of the *OCD* (1996).

tender into the terrible, with an almost burlesque effect.”¹⁰ J. P. Mahaffy, at the end of the century, was somewhat kinder in his appraisal, noting that “had we lost the *Iliad*, we should doubtless admire many of its features in the copy” (by which he means the *Aspis* ekphrasis). But fortunately, he goes on to say, “we are not reduced to this extremity.”¹¹ Where the *Iliad* shield is exciting and picturesque, says Mahaffy, the *Aspis* is “merely terrible and weird.” Which makes one think that perhaps Mahaffy’s most famous student, Oscar Wilde, would have made the perfect translator of the miniature epic.¹²

On those occasions when the Classicist does not choose to vent his disapproval of the style of the *Aspis*, the dismissal is done discreetly, with a charge of copying. Thus, T. W. Allen refers to “the palpable imitation” of *Iliad* 18 by the *Aspis*.¹³ Even Richard Janko lapses into the language of model and copy when it comes to this poem, claiming that it is one of a class of “late” compositions that imitates a fixed text of the *Iliad*.¹⁴ We shall return to this highly debatable notion later. The critical disparagement of the *Aspis* has deep roots in antiquity. Value judgments are entangled with questions of authenticity and authorship, when it comes to Homer versus Hesiod versus pseudo-Hesiod. Aristophanes of Byzantium, as we learn from the following ancient *hypothesis* to the *Aspis*, suspected that the poem was not by Hesiod but by an imitator of Homer. Others defended its authorship:

The beginning of the *Shield* is in circulation [φέρεται] in the fourth book of the *Catalogue*, extending to line fifty-six.¹⁵ And for this reason Aristophanes has suspected that it does not belong to Hesiod, but to someone else choosing to imitate [μιμήσασθαι] the Homeric shield. The Athenian Megacleides knows the poem to be genuine, but censures Hesiod; for he says it is illogical for Hephaestus to make armor for his mother’s enemies. Apollonius of Rhodes in the third book says it belongs to him [Hesiod] both from its style [ἐκ τοῦ χαρακτῆρος] and from finding that Iolaus again

¹⁰ Paley 1883, xxii.

¹¹ Mahaffy 1891.

¹² Mahaffy greatly influenced the young Wilde, whom he escorted to Greece and Italy; cf. Ellmann 1987, 27–28, 55, 70.

¹³ Allen 1924, 92; see Thalmann 1984, 64.

¹⁴ Janko 1986.

¹⁵ For this technical sense of φέρεσθαι in reference to literary attestation (frequent in scholia), see LSJ, ninth ed., s.v. VIII.

acts as the charioteer for Heracles in the *Catalogue*. And Stesichorus too says that the poem is Hesiod's.¹⁶

Apparently, Aristophanes based his reasoning first on the assumption that Hesiod *did* compose the *Catalogue of Women*, and second that Hesiod would *not* repeat fifty-six of his own lines (contained in Book 4 of the *Catalogue*) in composing another poem, the *Aspis*. One of the few other ancients to voice an opinion about the poem is pseudo-Longinus (*On the Sublime* 9.5). Comparing a few lines from this poem about Achlys, the mist of war-death, with the Homeric depiction of Eris (*Iliad* 4.442), he observes:

Quite unlike this is Hesiod's description of Gloom [ἄχλϋς], if indeed we are right in adding the *Shield* to the list of Hesiod's works; 'rheum from her nostrils was running' [*Aspis* 26]. He has not made the image terrible [δεινόν], but offensive [μισητόν].¹⁷

The critical attitude at this stage is not far from that of Friedrich Wolf, who undertook in 1817 to edit the *Aspis*, only to show, as he says, how in a few decades heroic verse had degenerated from the Homeric type.¹⁸ Two more recent critics have resisted the usual line. Andrew Becker, in a sophisticated book on *ekphrasis*, devotes some pages to the complex self-reflexive character of the *Aspis*, its constant directing of our attention toward the indescribable and unspeakable qualities of the very things it describes and speaks of.¹⁹ Robert Lamberton, in his general introduction to Hesiod, is not afraid to use "parasitic" in a value-neutral sense when speaking of the *Aspis*. He also speaks of its "outrageousness that is both satisfying and liberating," and brilliantly compares the poem to the art of Goya and to the Old Irish saga *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. Only Lamberton strikes one as actually liking this composition.²⁰

Has the *Aspis* failed so disastrously or have its interpreters? Could it be that terms like "failure" applied to archaic Greek poetry are themselves problematic? Before examining the specific verses that provoke the hottest criticism in the *Aspis* and trying to come up with a different critical idiom, we should draw back for a moment to recall the critics' criterion: Homer—as "Longinus" makes explicit. But whose Homer? The aesthetics of the

¹⁶ For the text, cf. Solmsen 1983, 86.

¹⁷ Translation by Fyfe 1932, 145–47.

¹⁸ On Wolf's edition, cf. Ranke 1840, v.

¹⁹ Becker 1995, 36–40, a condensation of Becker 1992.

²⁰ Lamberton 1988b, 138–44.

later critical tradition about epic are shaped by Aristotle. In the *Poetics*, he famously denigrated episodic narratives—for instance, poems united only because they dealt with Heracles—in favor of the $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\theta\omicron\varsigma\ \epsilon\tilde{\iota}\varsigma$, the organic plot, of the Homeric epics.²¹ While we can admire Aristotle's awareness of the uniqueness of Homer, we need not toss out the non-Homeric simply because it did not suit Aristotle's austere tastes.

Contemporary ethnophilology can broaden our scope. Study of heroic oral traditional literature in other cultures, whether Indic, Irish, West African, Central Asian, or South Slavic, will easily show that the single episode, lasting a few hours in performance, and chosen by the singer to fit the mood and politics of his immediate audience, is the basis for live composition in performance.²² Or in other words, the 480-line, single-episode *Aspis* looks much more like an oral poem than does the *Iliad*. Still, one may object, even if we restrain an Aristotelian appetite for the big-ticket organic epic, the *Aspis* does not satisfy. One can value the episodic and still find the *Aspis*, in its diction and structure, a mess—not to say, trash. I *want* to call it “trash” but I shall employ the term (and its affiliate, pulp) in a different register, as the name of a heuristic device rather than as a term of abuse. My intent in employing the trash aesthetic is not to reverse the terms, to plump for pulp, or to subvert canons of taste (by now a quaint archaism). It is a more neutral aim, to analyze techniques and stylistic traits common to the creation of pulp and to the pseudo-Hesiodic verses. We could simply rest content with the amusing irony that it took the world two millennia and millions of Hollywood dollars to catch up with the aesthetic of the *Aspis*. But it is better if we look for a critical payoff. After an analysis of the categories of pulp technique that match the strategies of the *Aspis*, the payoff will emerge first in the way of an internal stylistic analysis and then in a complete re-evaluation of the part this poem plays in relation to the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*.²³

We need to specify what characterizes the pulp aesthetic. Clive Bloom in *Cult Fiction* offers a range of features.²⁴ First among them, interestingly, is episodic narration—as he notes, it is good for serialization. Next, purposive, teleological movement in the plot is to be expected; so is a focus on outward

²¹ *Poetics* 1451a.

²² On the episode as unit, see Blackburn et al. 1989, 11; Belcher 1999, 27, 51; Flueckiger 1999, 133–34.

²³ It may not be amiss to view the *Catalogue*, in movie terms, as the ultimate chick-flick from antiquity: on the female-directed framing of a cognate passage, the “catalogue” in *Odyssey* 11, see Doherty 1991 and Martin 2001a.

²⁴ Bloom 1996, 132–55.

appearances and an avoidance of psychologizing action. Consistency of character is elevated over complex plot. Readers of pulp desire consistency, just as they constantly desire that a given narration will go the limit. Five modern genres can be said to operate by “pulp” rules—science fiction; horror; private eye; western; and superhero. I would place the *Aspis* on the cusp of the latter two categories. The poem features a superhero Heracles, son of Zeus, who is depicted battling it out with a bad character, Cycnus, son of Ares, in a shoot-'em-up scene reminiscent of the showdown at the OK Corral. At the same time, the pictures on the shield of Heracles give us plenty of horror touches, including vampirism. The term episodic fits the *Aspis*, as we have already said; so does lack of psychological realism. Perhaps it requires a long poem like the *Iliad* to articulate inner character and monumental composition of the Homeric type might thus represent a breakthrough for oral-poetic art. At any rate, it should be borne in mind that the practicalities of short, episodic length probably account for several of the other pulp features.

Although the title Bloom chooses for his chapter on the rules of pulp is “Living In Technicolor,” his main concern is verbal narrative, not movies. Comic books are as close as he gets to the visual. They happen to crystallize the critical issues especially well, because public outrage in the 1950s led to the creation of a voluntary Comics Code, and, as Bloom points out, simply reversing the proscriptions gives us a neat definition of pulp. The Code rules that “all scenes of horror, excessive bloodshed, gory or gruesome crimes, depravity, lust, sadism or masochism shall not be permitted.”²⁵ Delete the negative and you have the recipe for a bestseller. For cinematic strategies equivalent to the pulp rules, I am taking into account the above-mentioned, all of which seem to apply to the *Aspis*. In addition, the following more technical feature can be matched with passages from the poem.

First, *noise*. The trashier the movie, the louder it is. Fans of David Lynch’s highly disturbed *Eraserhead* will recall the screech level. Merchant and Ivory films, by contrast, are as silent as the tomb; classic Bergman is near soundless. The *Aspis* on the other hand is loud: it has been calculated that sound words occur nearly twice as often in the pseudo-Hesiodic as in the Homeric shield.²⁶ Lines 57–65 are not untypical. They describe Heracles’ discovery of Cycnus and his father Ares standing in a chariot:

²⁵ Bloom 1996, 142–43.

²⁶ Picot 1998, 50 n. 13; see also Lamberton 1988b, 142 on noise in the *Aspis*.

Ὅς καὶ Κύκνον ἔπεφεν, Ἀρητιάδην μεγάλθυμον.
 εὖρε γὰρ ἐν τεμένει ἐκατηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος
 αὐτὸν καὶ πατέρα ὄν Ἀρη', ἄατον πολέμοιο,
 τεύχεσι λαμπομένους σέλας ὥς πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο, 60
 ἐσταότ' ἐν δίφρῳ χθόνα δ' ἔκτυπον ὠκέες ἵπποι
 νύσσοντες χηλῇσι, κόνις δέ σφ' ἀμφιδεδήει
 κοπτομένη πλεκτοῖσιν ὑφ' ἄρμασι καὶ ποσὶν ἵππων
 ἄρματα δ' εὐποίητα καὶ ἄντυγες ἀμφαράβιζον
 ἵππων ἰεμένων. κεχάρητο δὲ Κύκνος ἀμύμων ... 65

And he slew Cycnus, the gallant son of Ares. For he found
 him in the precinct of far-shooting Apollo, him and his father
 Ares, never sated with war. Their armor shone like a flame of
 blazing fire as they two stood in their chariot: their swift horses
 struck the earth and pawed it with their hoofs, and the dust rose
 like smoke about them, pounded by the chariot wheels and the
 horses' hoofs, while the well-made chariot and its rails rattled
 around them as the horses plunged. And blameless Cycnus was
 glad ...²⁷

The staccato sounds of line 59—αὐτὸν καὶ πατέρα ὄν Ἀρη', ἄατον
 πολέμοιο—provide a drumbeat. Light effects—flashing armor in the grove—are
 followed by horses beating the ground, scratching hooves, dust flying
 up, more beating (κοπτομένη, 63), and then the rumble of the chariot
 wheels (ἀμφαράβιζον, 64), all of which occurs before anyone even thinks of
 fighting. Noise surrounds the auditor of the *Aspis*. More often, it is coupled
 with spectacular sights and colors—the equivalent of animated special effects
 in film. Three passages might be adduced in this connection. The first (191-
 96) comes from the shield description:

Ἐν δ' Ἄρεος βλοσυροῖο ποδώκεες ἔστασαν ἵπποι
 χρύσειοι, ἐν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐναρσφόρος οὐλλίος Ἀρης,
 αἰχμὴν ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων, πρυλέεσσι κελεύων,
 αἵματι φοινικέοις ὥς εἰ ζωοὺς ἐναρίζων,
 δίφρου ἐπεμβεβαῶς παρὰ δὲ Δεῖμός τε Φόβος τε 195
 ἔστασαν ἰεμενοὶ πόλεμον καταδύμεναι ἀνδρῶν.

And on [the shield] stood the fleet-footed horses of grim Ares
 made of gold, and deadly Ares the spoil-winner himself. He held
 a spear in his hands and was urging on the footmen: he was red

²⁷ Translations throughout are based on Evelyn-White 1914, with minor changes.

with blood as if he were slaying living men, and he stood in his chariot. Beside him stood Fear and Dread, eager to plunge amidst the fighting men.

Unlike the dynamic of the *Iliad* shield's arming, we are not looking over the god's shoulder as he manufactures the inlays. This artifact is completed already and the *en* phrases are static, not part of a larger phrase "he made on it" (contrast, e.g., *Iliad* 18.483, 490). Even so there is movement and color. Fear and Dread stand straining to enter the fray. Ares is urging on the fighters, stepping onto the chariot. His golden horses contrast with the bloody god (αἵματι φοινικόεις, 194). If we imagine the polished shield as both depicting and reflecting, it is interesting that the same god is facing Heracles at this very moment, as if his picture were caught on the lens of the shield surface.

The next two passages to contemplate are more complicated combinations of color, or of color and sound, featuring extensive synaesthesia. At line 139, Heracles picks up the shield, described as "all-glancing" (*panaiolon*). This initial appearance is then developed further in lines 141–48:

πᾶν μὲν γὰρ κύκλῳ τιτάνῳ λευκῷ τ' ἐλέφαντι
 ἠλέκτρον θ' ὑπολαμπὲς ἔην χρυσῷ τε φαιινῷ
 λαμπόμενον, κυάνου δὲ διὰ πτύχες ἠλήλαντο.
 ἐν μέσσω δ' ἀδάμαντος ἔην Φόβος οὐ τι φατειός,
 ἔμπαλιν ὅσσοισιν πυρὶ λαμπομένοισι δεδορκώς 145
 τοῦ καὶ ὀδόντων μὲν πλητο στόμα λευκαθεόντων,
 δεινῶν, ἀπλήτων, ἐπὶ δὲ βλοσυροῖο μετώπου
 δεινὴ Ἔρις πεπότητο κορύσσουσα κλόνον ἀνδρῶν...

For its whole orb shimmered with enamel and white ivory and electrum, and it glowed with shining gold; and there were zones of cyanus drawn upon it. In the center was Fear worked in adamant, unspeakable, staring backwards with eyes that glowed with fire. His mouth was full of teeth in a white row, fearful and daunting, and upon his grim brow hovered frightful Strife who arrays the throng of men ...

If we disregard Heyne's rejection of 143, we can add dark blue to the palette. Perhaps the reason he rejected the line and Solmsen continues to bracket it in the Oxford text is this very garishness. The lights come up, as Phobos, in the center, looks back with fire-gleaming eyes. And then we are back to colors, with his white gleaming teeth (146). Strife is apparently

floating above his face, described as βλοσυρός, an adjective of uncertain meaning, much beloved by the *Aspis* poet. The second passage (228–37) has even more of this effect:

αὐτὸς δὲ σπεύδοντι καὶ ἐρρίγοντι ἔοικώς
 Περσεὺς Δαναΐδης ἐπιταίνεται· ταὶ δὲ μετ' αὐτὸν
 Γοργόνες ἅπλητοί τε καὶ οὐ φαταὶ ἐρρώοντο 230
 ἰέμεναι μαπέειν ἐπὶ δὲ χλωροῦ ἀδάμαντος
 βαινουσέων ἰάχεσκε σάκος μέγῳ ὀρυμαγδῷ
 ὀξέα καὶ λιγέως ἐπὶ δὲ ζώνησι δρᾶκοντε
 δοιῶ ἀπηρωρεῦντ' ἐπικυρτώνοντε κάρηνα
 λίχμαζον δ' ἄρα τῷ γε, μένει δ' ἐχάρασσον ὀδόντας 235
 ἄγρια δερκομένω ἐπὶ δὲ δεινοῖσι καρήνοισι
 Γοργείοις ἐδονεῖτο μέγας φόβος. ...

Perseus himself, the son of Danae, was at full stretch, like one who hurries and shudders with horror. And after him rushed the Gorgons, unapproachable and unspeakable, longing to seize him; as they trod upon the pale adamant, the shield rang sharp and clear with a loud clanging. Two serpents hung down at their girdles with heads curved forward; their tongues were flickering, and their teeth gnashing with fury, and their eyes glaring fiercely. And upon the awful heads of the Gorgons great fear was quaking.

The scenery—Perseus chased by the Gorgons—was common in archaic art. This and other details led archaeologically-minded critics, such as Myres and Cook, to date the *Aspis* to the sixth century BCE.²⁸ I am more interested in the sound effects that tart up the action here. As they tread on the pale adamant of the shield, the pursuing Gorgons make the metal shriek and clang (233), sharp and shrill. We then get a visual moment (dual snakes dangling from their belts), followed by more noise: the snakes are sticking out their tongues (presumably hissing) and clashing their teeth. We are not meant to pause and ask whether snakes actually have teeth, since to an audience it doesn't matter—it is over the top, scary, and therefore great.²⁹

This passage, with its snakes in tight focus, shows us something of the effect of the camera dolly in. Extreme close-up is a staple of trash cinema,

²⁸ Cook 1937 and Myres 1941.

²⁹ Part of the project of trash aesthetics is “taking audiences and their pleasures seriously”: Cartmell et al. 1997, 1. The frequency of violent scenes, especially Gorgon-slaying, in sixth-century vase-painting should tell us something about tastes in poetry as well

as it is of porn, a related genre. Knives, bullets, or other invasive instruments more tellingly hit a nerve the closer you see them. In the *Aspis*, the hero's body is never really glimpsed, sheathed as it is in various pieces of armament and armor. The constituents, however, are celebrated visually, in synecdochic homage to the hero within. One item gets an especially close camera shot (128–38):

θήκατο δ' ἄμφ' ὤμοισιν ἀρής ἀλκτῆρα σίδηρον,
 δεινὸς ἀνήρ· κοίλῃν δὲ περὶ στήθεσσι φαρέτρην
 κάββαλεν ἐξόπιθεν· πολλοὶ δ' ἔντοσθεν οἴστοι 130
 ῥιγῆλοι, θανάτιο λαθιφθόγγοιο δοτῆρες·
 πρόσθεν μὲν θάνατόν τ' εἶχον καὶ δάκρυσι μῦρον,
 μέσσοι δὲ ξέστοι, περιμήκες, αὐτὰρ ὀπισθε
 μόρφνοιο φλεγύας καλυπτόμενοι πτερύγεσσιν.
 εἵλετο δ' ὄβριμον ἔγχος, ἀκαχμένον αἴθοπι χαλκῷ. 135
 κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἰφθίμῳ κυνέην εὐτυκτον ἔθηκε,
 δαδάλειν, ἀδάμαντος, ἐπὶ κροτάφοις ἀραρυῖαν,
 ἧ τ' εἴρυτο κάρη Ἥρακλῆος θείοιο.

Over his shoulders the fierce warrior put the steel that saves men from doom, and across his breast he slung behind him a hollow quiver. Within it were many chilling arrows, dealers of death which makes speech forgotten: in front they had death, and trickled with tears; their shafts were smooth and very long; and their butts were covered with feathers of a brown eagle. And he took his strong spear, pointed with shining bronze, and on his valiant head set a well-made helm of adamant, cunningly wrought, which fitted closely on the temples; and that guarded the head of god-like Heracles ...

The deadly arrows of Heracles are transformed into tripartite beasts, like Geryon or the Chimaera, at lines 131–34. They bring the chill of doom; they are dealers of death that makes one forget how to talk. The way in which the weapon, lovingly described in close-up, captures the essence of the killer Heracles, recalls such pulp classics as *The Maltese Falcon*. Compare the way in which the essence of Dashiell Hammett's hero is captured as he rolls tobacco:

Spade's thick fingers made a cigarette with deliberate care, sifting a measured quantity of tan flakes down into a curved paper, spreading the flakes so that they lay equal at the ends with a slight depression in the middle, thumbs rolling the paper's inner edge down and up under the outer

edges as forefingers pressed it over, thumbs and fingers sliding to the paper cylinder's ends to hold it even while tongue licked the flap, left forefinger and thumb pinching their end while right forefinger and thumb smoothed the damp seam, right forefinger and thumb twisting their end and lifting the other to Sam's mouth.³⁰

Spade's cigarette may have more erotic potential than Heracles' arrows, but the extravagant desire of the camera for the object, the extreme close-up, is the same as in the *Aspis*. Slow motion is obtained both in Homeric narrative and in the *Aspis* by the device of the simile, which acts like a freeze-frame, pausing the action as the poet develops another, analogical argument to interpret the scene within the scene. One thinks of such trash effects as the use of split screens in Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*—itself a parodic use of the technique developed by B-grade movies and TV in the 1960s. What makes the *Aspis* different, trashier than the *Iliad*, is a matter of degree: the simile overload, the complexity and action of the similes themselves, and the subsequent time-lag this brings about. Consider lines 374–92:

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἀφ' ὑψηλῆς κορυφῆς ὄρεος μεγάλοιο πέτραι ἀποθρώσκουσιν, ἐπ' ἀλλήλαις δὲ πέσωσι,	375
πολλαὶ δὲ δρυὲς ὑψίκομοι, πολλὰ δέ τε πεῦκα αἰγυριοὶ τε τανύρριζοι ῥήγνυνται ὑπ' αὐτέων ρίμφα κυλινδομένων, ἥος πεδίονδ' ἀφίκωνται, ὥς οἱ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι πέσον μέγα κεκλήγοντες. πᾶσα δὲ Μυρμιδόνων τε πόλις κλειτὴ τ' Ἰαωλκὸς	380
Ἄρνη τ' ἠδ' Ἑλίκη Ἀνθειά τε ποιήεσσα φωνῇ ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων μεγάλ' ἔαχον· οἱ δ' ἀλαλητῶ θεσπεσίῳ σύνισαν μέγα δ' ἔκτυπε μητίετα Ζεὺς, καὶ δ' ἄρ' ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν ψιάδας βάλεν αἵματοέσσας, σῆμα τιθεὶς πολέμοιο ἐῷ μεγαθαροσεί παιδί.	385
οἷος δ' ἐν βήσσης ὄρεος χαλεπὸς προῖδέσθαι κάπρος χαυλιόδων φρονέει θυμῷ μαχέσασθαι ἀνδράσι θηρευτῆς, θήγει δέ τε λευκὸν ὀδόντα δοχμωθεὶς, ἀφρὸς δὲ περὶ στόμα μαστιχόντων λείβεται, ὅσσε δέ οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόντι ἔϊκτον,	390
ὀρθὰς δ' ἐν λοφιῇ φρίσσει τρίχας ἀμφί τε δειρῆν τῷ ἔκελος Διὸς υἱὸς ἀφ' ἱππείου θόρε δίφρου.	

As when rocks leap forth from the high peak of a great mountain, and fall on one another, and many towering oaks and pines

³⁰ Cited in Bloom 1996, 223–34.

and long-rooted poplars are broken by them as they whirl swiftly down until they reach the plain; so did they fall on one another with a great shout: and all the town of the Myrmidons, and famous Iolcus, and Arne, and Helice, and grassy Anthea echoed loudly at the voice of the two. With an awful cry they closed: and wise Zeus thundered loudly and rained down drops of blood, giving the signal for battle to his dauntless son. As a tusked boar, fearful for a man to see before him in the glens of a mountain, resolves to fight with the huntsmen and whets his white tusks, turning sideways, while foam flows all round his mouth as he gnashes, and his eyes are like glowing fire, and he bristles the hair on his mane and around his neck—like him the son of Zeus leaped from his horse chariot.

Cycnus and Heracles have just dismounted—their charioteers drive the horses off, with obligatory sound effect. The heroes are about to go to it, when a simile intervenes: just as when rocks leap from a high peak and fall on one another, and no fewer than three varieties of trees are crushed as these boulders rumble down the hill to the plain—such is the way the men fell on one another (with a scream, for good measure). It takes a long time for those rocks to drop. The sound resounds, introducing in artful fashion various place names, all the towns that reverberate to the spreading noise.³¹ Two more noises (a war cry and Zeus' thunder) delay the clash even more—the enemies still have not engaged, as far as we hear. And then a meteorological *tour de force*, bloody rain: not, as in the *Iliad*, to mourn a hero's imminent death, but a sign from Zeus that his son is going to win.³² We still have not arrived at the first punch, when a second simile takes over: the gnashing, bristling, foaming boar. Like many other “real” parts of the combat, this finds its analogue on the shield—recall the image of white-toothed, flaming-eyed Phobos. A glance at the further text of this passage reveals that nine lines of seasonal description (setting the time of this combat) and two more similes, of eleven lines in total, are yet to come. Only then does Cycnus make the first spear-cast. This is not incompetence on the part of the poet, but simply a different aesthetic, privileging manipulation and suspense, the sort of sustained slow motion that commands the viewer to look while it refuses to reward the gaze. Striptease may be the apt trash analogy.

³¹ The technique (following a sound in order to further a narrative) resembles that of the “shouting in prison” theme of South Slavic epic: cf. J. M. Foley 1990, 288–327.

³² Contrast *Iliad* 16.459 and cf. the *Aspis* scholiast's comment in Ranke 1840 *ad loc.*

Overblown or awkward dialogue is often a component of pulp, as it is of the *Aspis*. This is a consequence of the mode's overriding orientation toward action. One speech that seems out of all proportion contains the words of Iolaus to Heracles at lines 103–14. In a run-on fashion, with everything mentioned in pairs, the younger hero says: “Good friend, indeed the father of men and gods honors your head, as does bull-like Earth Shaker, he who holds the veils of Thebe and protects the city. Such a mortal as this tough and big, are they leading into our hands, so you can win fine *kleos*.” He urges Heracles to arm and concludes that “Ares shall not frighten the unshakeable son of Zeus or make the son of Iphicles run away. I think he is the one who will flee the two sons of the blameless son of Alcaeus, who are close upon him eager for war, and combat which is dearer to them than a banquet.” This is probably not characterization by style—the younger warrior spouting whatever comes into his head—but rather the poet loading on every cliché he can come up with. Pulp likes to spell things out: important scene coming up.

If the modern examples so far seem common and the *Aspis* examples unexceptional or hackneyed, perhaps it is precisely because we are awash in pulp, which has become the default mode. Sexploitation, blaxploitation—even now, in Italian film, nunsplotation—all overwhelm the sensibilities. Yet they are just the logical endpoint of a marked tendency within the medium. As Doris Wishman, the director who brought us *Nude on the Moon* and *Bad Girls Go To Hell*, once said, “Let me tell you something—all movies are exploitation movies.”³³ Saturation raises the ante—the next trash movie will have to be that much trashier. Tarantino goes from *Reservoir Dogs* to *Pulp Fiction* to *Four Rooms*—quite conscious that his audience dares him to do the next bad thing.³⁴ One suspects ancient epic audiences experienced the same proliferation. For every Kurosawa—the best directorial analogue for the Homeric poet—there were a dozen would-be Doris Wishmans, composing *Aspis*-like combats for a hungry crowd.³⁵

³³ Quoted in Mendik and Harper 2000, 157.

³⁴ Tarantino, quoted in Woods 1996, 108, about the possibility of making further spin-offs of *Pulp Fiction*: “I like the idea that I’m taking a genre that already exists and reinventing it, like Leone re-invented the whole Western genre. I think I’ve taken on an established genre like the pulp thriller and made it challenging to myself *and to my audience*” (emphasis mine).

³⁵ Acting in unison are the sophistication of a trash-conscious audience, a steady rate of consumption and production, and a high degree of formulaic construction and thus expectation. Worth re-examining from this sociopoetic perspective is Roger Corman’s series *The Student Nurses* (1970), *Private Duty Nurses* (1972), *Night Call Nurses* (1972), *The Young Nurses* (1973), and *Candy Stripe Nurses* (1974), on which see McGee 1988, 83.

Pulp poetics depend on a simple overriding rule: more is more. When we turn finally to the category of excess and some illustrative passages, it may seem redundant to speak of this principle. After all, the entire *Aspis* is excessive and that is essentially what makes it distinct from Homeric epic. I would, however, like to articulate a bit further *how* this poem makes itself more. The technique involves both the accumulation of detail and the type of detail piled on. There is a crescendo effect, apparently: a sort of *Gesetz der wachsenden Schrecklichkeit*. At the level of verse and phrase, the accumulating details are detachable. That is, they most often are loosely connected syntactically, added subjects or noun modifiers unnecessarily enjambed or strung along in *lexis eiromenê*. Finally, the heaping up of detail has its own rhythm. Most favored is the triplet, or triplets within triplets. Consider lines 149–67:³⁶

σχετλίη, ἥ ῥα νόον τε καὶ ἐκ φρένας εἴλετο φωτῶν οὔτινες ἀντιβίην πόλεμον Διὸς νῦν φέροιεν.	150
τῶν καὶ ψυχὰι μὲν χθόνα δύνουσ' Ἄιδος εἶσω αὐτῶν, ὅστέα δέ σφι περὶ ῥίνοιο σαπείσης Σειρίου ἀζαλέοιο κελαινῇ πύθεται αἶη. ἐν δὲ Προϊώξις τε Παλίωξις τε τέτυκτο, ἐν δ' Ὀμαδός τε Φόνος τ' Ἀνδροκτασίη τε δεδήει,	155
ἐν δ' Ἑρις, ἐν δὲ Κυδοιμὸς ἐθύνεον, ἐν δ' ὀλοὴ Κῆρ ἄλλον ζῶν ἔχουσα νεούτατον, ἄλλον ἄουτον, ἄλλον τεθνηῶτα κατὰ μόθον ἔλκε ποδοῖν εἶμα δ' ἔχ' ἄμφ' ὥμοισι δαφοινεὸν αἵματι φωτῶν, δεινὸν δερκομένην καναχῇσί τε βεβρυχυῖα.	160
Ἐν δ' ὀφίων κεφαλαὶ δεινῶν ἔσαν, οὗ τι φατειῶν, δώδεκα, ταὶ φοβέεσκον ἐπὶ χθονὶ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων οὔτινες ἀντιβίην πόλεμον Διὸς νῦν φέροιεν. τῶν καὶ ὀδόντων μὲν καναχὴ πέλεν, εὗτε μάχοιτο Ἀμφιτρυωνιάδης· τὰ δ' ἐδαίετο θαυματὰ ἔργα· στίγματα δ' ὥς ἐπέφαντο ἰδεῖν δεινοῖσι δράκουσι· κυάνεοι κατὰ νῶτα, μελάνθησαν δὲ γένεια.	165

Pitiless she, for she took away the mind and senses of poor wretches who made war against the son of Zeus. Their souls passed beneath the earth and went down into the house of Hades;

³⁶ The juicier pulpy excess in Solmsen's *Oxford Classical Text* of the poem is often found within brackets, iconic for the chaste editor's hands blinkering his eyes at the scarier parts of the movie.

but their bones, when the skin is rotted about them, crumble away on the dark earth under parching Sirius. Upon the shield Pursuit and Flight were wrought, and Tumult, and Panic, and Slaughter. Strife also, and Uproar were hurrying about, and deadly Fate was there holding one man newly wounded, and another unwounded; and one, who was dead, she was dragging by the feet through the tumult. She had on her shoulders a garment red with the blood of men, and terribly she glared and gnashed her teeth. And there were heads of snakes unspeakably frightful, twelve of them; and they used to frighten the tribes of men on earth who made war against the son of Zeus; for they would clash their teeth when Amphitryon's son was fighting; and brightly shone these wonderful works. And it was as though there were spots upon the frightful snakes; they were dark blue on their backs, but their jaws were black.

This section picks up after the description of Strife (see above): “Hard to deal with, that one; whosoever makes war with the son of Zeus, she takes their mind away.” The *Aspis* poet is nothing if not methodical. So much for the enemy mind; now what about their bodies and souls? A *men/de* does it: the souls go under the earth, while the bones, when the skin rots around them, putrefy on the black earth with Sirius parching them. That gives us the whole picture. It may seem too much that, next, alongside Pursuit and Flight, we have Hubbub, Murder, and Manslaughter. Editors desperately hit the delete key when, in line 156, Strife, Moil, and Fate join this fray. But look at the architecture before you take out the airbrush. Lines 154–56 (unbracket the last) make a nice triple crescendo: ἐν + τε + τε (two items); then ἐν + τε + τε + τε (three items); then ἐν + ἐν + ἐν (three items), and an adjective for good measure. This triplet trips another wire. *Kêr* has three victims, nicely arranged in waxing style (157–58). And a third triplet completes the set of three. For Fate wears a bloody garment (159), glares terribly (160), and is gnashing her teeth (160)—as most beings in this poem eventually do (compare the twelve blue-black unspeakable serpents in line 164, who gnash whenever Heracles works out). Enough with excess, you may say. But as more is more in this poem, so there is more to say. The following passage would make the perfect box-office poster, were the *Aspis* a movie. By now, we are used to the blue Fates with white teeth and βλοσυροί foreheads. We yawn, perhaps, as they do battle to suck the blood of the newly fallen (250ff.), clamp corpses in their claws, and toss back the bodies when they have sated themselves with gore. The female-wrestling match among Klothô

and her sisters should definitely remain in our texts.³⁷ And then arrives the poster child, Achlys, the internal audience for all these shenanigans (264ff.). Terrible, mournful, pale, shriveled and reduced by hunger, with swollen knees and long fingernails, she is the ideal Boogy Woman. From her drip snot, blood, and tears (another triplet), which mingle with the dust on her shoulders—about as good as it gets.

Where does all this analysis ultimately lead us? It hardly takes talent to perceive that the *Aspis* is, by most people's standards, gross and over-written. Can the trash aesthetic as delineated and illustrated here help us to resolve weightier questions of composition and literary history? I would argue that it can, in fact, ease, if not resolve, long-standing dilemmas posed by the poem, both internal and external. The internal first. Wilamowitz first systematically analyzed what he called "dittography" in this poem. He drew attention to the recurrent phenomenon visible, for example, in lines 282–83 within the following passage:

αἱ δ' ὑπὸ φορμίγγων ἄναγον χορὸν ἰμερόεντα. 280
 ἔνθεν δ' αὖθ' ἐτέρωθε νέοι κώμαζον ὑπ' αὐλοῦ.
 τοί γε μὲν αὖ παίζοντες ὑπ' ὀρχηθμῷ καὶ αἰοιδῇ
 τοί γε μὲν αὖ γελῶντες ὑπ' αὐλητῇρι ἕκαστος
 πρόσθ' ἔκιοι πᾶσαν δὲ πόλιν θαλῖαι τε χοροί τε
 ἀγλαΐαι τ' εἶχον.

And the girls led on the lovely dance to the sound of lyres. Then again on the other side was a rout of young men revelling, with flutes playing; some frolicking with dance and song, and others were going forward in time with a flute player and laughing. The whole town was filled with mirth and dance and festivity.

What produced these apparently interchangeable lines? According to Wilamowitz, they arose from variation originating in different rhapsodic performances of the poem.³⁸ In other words, the texts of the *Aspis* that reached the Alexandrians were texts produced or used by professional reciters. Richard Janko, eighty years later, flirted with a similar conclusion about this poem, but he has shied away from this finding when it comes to

³⁷ An inversion of *Vampirella* (1996), one of the brilliant Roger Corman's more than 500 productions: on his horror/parody aesthetic see Corman 1990 and McGee 1988.

³⁸ Wilamowitz 1905, 122: "Was nach Alexandreia kam, also Handschriften des 4. Jahrhunderts, waren Rhapsodenexemplare."

the text of Homer.³⁹ And yet it should be remembered that Aristophanes of Byzantium employed a critical sign to indicate interchangeable consecutive lines within Homer, showing us that what appears to be exactly the same phenomenon was once detectable there as well.⁴⁰ Speaking of the *Aspis*, Janko, wedded to a notion of rigidly fixed texts and relying on the methodology of his Cambridge dissertation, calls this “rhapsodic interpolation,” a phrase that would suggest a rather different phenomenon. Janko’s term assumes a fixed text of the *Aspis* (and in fact, he dates the poem on historical grounds quite precisely to the years between 591 and 570 BCE).⁴¹ Furthermore, it postulates rhapsodes who possess and then wish to tinker with that text.

A simpler, and I believe more plausible, treatment of this situation can start from a consideration of the other rough spots of alleged “dittography.” Wilamowitz’ model would posit a redactor attempting for some reason to record alternate versions of the text. Janko’s interpolation theory is an even more text-oriented way of putting the same case. But what is remarkable about these so-called doublets is that only one of the several pairs simply cannot make sense as they stand: with lines 282–83, one has to choose one verse over the other. The other doublets reflect an attempt by somebody, apparently a person knowledgeable about traditional diction, to stitch lines together. Take, for example, the description of the harbor on the shield at lines 207–15:

Ἐν δὲ λιμὴν εὖορμος ἀμαιμακέτοιο θαλάσσης
κυκλοτερῆς ἐτέτυκτο πανέφθου κασσιτέροιο
κλυζομένην ἵκελος· πολλοί γε μὲν ἄμ μέσον αὐτοῦ
δελφῖνες τῇ καὶ τῇ ἐθύνεον ἰχθυάοντες 210
νηχομένοις ἵκελοι· δοιῶ δ’ ἀναφυσιόωντες
ἀργύρεοι δελφῖνες ἐφοίβειον ἔλλοπας ἰχθύς.
τῶν δ’ ὕπο χάλκαιοι τρέον ἰχθύες· αὐτὰρ ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς
ἦστο ἀνὴρ ἀλιεὺς δεδοκημένος, εἶχε δὲ χερσὶν
ἰχθύσιν ἀμφίβληστρον ἀπορρίψοντι ἑοικώς. 215

³⁹ Janko 1986, 39–40. This is not the place to enter the debate on the importance, in the case of variant readings, of the rhapsodic heritage underlying the Homeric texts: for opposed viewpoints, see Janko 1998 and Nagy 1998. I point out, however, that the *Aspis* evidence has not previously been employed in the discussion. An interpretation along the lines sketched by Wilamowitz, with the modifications I offer, adds further weight to the plausible arguments of Nagy.

⁴⁰ Pfeiffer 1968, 178.

⁴¹ Janko 1986. On his methodology, see Taplin 1992, 33 n. 39. The statistical arguments for dating based on the attestation of certain “late” morphological features fail to take into account repeated elements of diction. Furthermore, there is no criterion for distinguishing “false” archaisms from authentic ones.

And on the shield was a harbor with a safe haven from the irresistible sea, made of refined tin wrought in a circle, and it seemed to heave with waves. In the middle of it were many dolphins rushing this way and that, fishing; and they seemed to be swimming. Two dolphins of silver were spouting and devouring the mute fishes. And beneath them fishes of bronze were trembling. And on the shore sat a fisherman watching; in his hands he held a casting net for fish, and seemed as if about to cast it forth.

There is nothing syntactically offensive about the curving harbor, made of tin, with its swell of waves. Dolphins, like swimmers, sport in it. Lines 209–11 have been bracketed as too close in meaning to 211–12. But the technique of this poet calls for close-up shots, as we have seen; thus, the latter lines focus us on two dolphins, who spout off and chase the fish. Another camera shift (213) tracks the fish as they dart off in fear. Finally, the camera pulls back to show us a fisherman, playing the role of internal audience for this scene (as was Achlys in her scene), just as he is about to do his own fish-catching.

This, and other such passages (e.g., 203–5; 293–95), are neither smooth nor elegant, but do reward efforts to understand them. If we are willing to make such efforts for Aeschylus, Stesichorus, and Apollonius, whose styles all engage the same “pulp” mode on occasion, then we should give the *Aspis* the benefit of the doubt.⁴² The key to a sympathetic understanding is to admit that the composer of the *Aspis* wanted at every turn to make a bigger, more detailed, often gorier, usually livelier poem. And if that meant hauling out his best lines and puffing them up with good lines from other rhapsodes he had heard, all the better: no expansion is too bad to venture.⁴³ If trash demands it, live performance encourages it. A glance at run-of-the-mill epics, episodic and oral, as transcribed from live performance, can show one exactly the same “mistakes” that occur when a singer or reciter takes risks and plays up a theme, sometimes to excess, for an eager audience. The virtuosos of a tradition, whether Indic Ram recitations, Egyptian Hilali epic, or the Sunjata of West Africa, think well on their feet and can telescope as well as expand. For the majority of oral bards, however, expansion is the

⁴² It is not accidental that ancient traditions associated Hesiod and Stesichorus, even to the point of naming the latter a son of Hesiod: see Mazon 1928, xiii.

⁴³ On the expansion aesthetic as operating in the *Iliad*, see Martin 1989. The difference with the *Aspis* once again is merely quantitative.

easier option.⁴⁴ A cognate Greek illustration can be found in a so-called “wild” papyrus (PBerol. 9771, first century BCE) featuring the *ekphrasis* of Achilles’ shield in the *Iliad*.⁴⁵ Allen and West print these “plus” lines, not attested in the mainstream manuscript tradition, in the apparatus as *Iliad* 18.608a–d:

ἐν δὲ λιμὴν ἐτέτυκ[το] ἔανοῦ κασσιτέροιο
 κλυζ[ομ]ένωι ἱκ[ε]λος δοιῶ δ’ ἀναφυσιώω[ντες]
 ἀργύ[ρο]ι δελφῖνες ἐ[ξ]φοίνεον ἔλλοπας [ι]χθύς
 τοῦ δ’ ὕπ[ο] χάλκε[ιο]ι τρέον [ι]χθύες α[ὐ]τὰρ ἐπ’ ἀκταις

And on the shield was a harbor made of refined tin and it seemed to heave with waves. Two dolphins of silver were spouting and killing the mute fishes. And beneath this fishes of bronze were trembling. And on the shores ...

When we compare them with the *Aspis*, lines 207–13, the following pattern emerges (underlined phrases showing matches between the lines, italicized bold showing near matches):

Ἐν δὲ λιμὴν εὖορμος ἀμαιμακέτοιο θαλάσσης
 κυκλοτερὴς ἐτέτυκτο πανέφθου κασσιτέροιο
 κλυζομένω ἱκελος πολλοί γε μὲν ἄμ μέσον αὐτοῦ
δελφῖνες τῇ καὶ τῇ ἐθύνεον ἰχθυάοντες 210
 νηχομένοις ἱκελον δοιῶ δ’ ἀναφυσιώωντες
 ἀργύροιοι δελφῖνες **ἐφοίβον** ἔλλοπας ἰχθύς.
 τῶν δ’ ὕπο χάλκειοι τρέον ἰχθύες αὐτὰρ ἐπ’ **ἀκτῆς**...

And on the shield was a harbor with a safe haven from the irresistible sea, made of refined tin wrought in a circle, and it seemed to heave with waves. In the middle of it were many dolphins rushing this way and that, fishing; and they seemed to be swimming. Two dolphins of silver were spouting and devouring the mute fishes. And beneath them fishes of bronze were trembling. And on the shore ...

From the point of view of the *Aspis*, the *Iliad* plus-verses—albeit already an “expansion” on the commonly attested way of narrating the Achilles

⁴⁴ For examples of such “mistakes” that reflect convergence of themes in the poet’s memory, see Lord 2000, 94–95 and 1991, 29; on metrical “errors” as indicating thematic or formulaic seams, see J. M. Foley 1999, 72–74.

⁴⁵ For the most recent analysis of the papyrus, see Natalucci 2000, who considers it a valid representative of a once fuller, pre-Aristarchean version of the *Iliad* scene and not a product of cross-interpolation.

shield scene—have telescoped an even longer way of narrating. Vice versa, we could say that the *Aspis* version expands on an already “expansive” version of the *Iliad* scene. Doubters and “scripsists” will say that this is proof the brackets at lines 209–11 belong where they are, that those verses are “interpolated,” since the *Iliad* papyrus at line 608b seems to be the equivalent of *Aspis* 209 (first segment) with line 211 (final segment).⁴⁶ Yet this is to make the hazardous assumption that the *Aspis* is copying a specific text of the *Iliad*, and yet doing so from a perspective that took account of a paraliadic tradition at the same time as it expatiated on the “text.” If one maintains a more flexible (and ethnographically more plausible) hermeneutic, the two passages in question are simply big and small variants of the same theme, subjected to the sort of free-wheeling expansion or telescoping typical of live performance.⁴⁷ The point is that the *Aspis*, in such a situation, will always choose to go large.

Now we can turn to the question most relevant to broader literary history: just who was this composer of an always-over-the-top *Aspis*? I would risk asserting that it was the same person who composed the *Catalogue of Women*, and not just the individual *ehoie* about Alcmene, which, according to the *hypothesis*, contained the first fifty-six lines of the *Aspis*, but the entire poem. My suggestion is built on four kinds of evidence, which I shall conclude by explaining.

First, there is the evidence of separability. By this, I mean the scattered remarks indicating how portions of hexameter verse that we moderns may consider organic in a poem were once treated by some ancient scholars as detachable. The A-scholia to *Iliad* 18.39–49 record that Zenodotus first athetized the description of the Nereid chorus because it had a “Hesiodic *kharaktêr*.” (Recall that the *kharaktêr* of the *Aspis* was cited by Apollonius Rhodius, according to the *hypothesis*, in his defense of its attribution to

⁴⁶ On “scripsists,” see Taplin 1992, 35–37. Revermann 1998, for example, wants to see the plus-verses in the *Iliad* at this point as “a peculiar interpolation of a condensed version” of the *Aspis* verses. He leaves open the possibility that the *Iliad* lines are due to “rhapsodic intervention and amplification,” yet it is clear from his further remarks that he has in mind a textual phenomenon, in which individual rhapsodes are mere conduits allowing verses to leach from one *recorded* poem into another. Orality, in this model, is incidental. By way of contrast, I propose that what we see in the *Aspis* and *Iliad* overlap is much messier and closer to a true recomposition-in-performance. The poet whose work made its way into the Berlin papyrus has produced a different way of ornamenting the scene, which happens to bear a family resemblance to the *Aspis*. But as we can see, the lines do not present a simple transposition of pre-existing *Aspis* lines inserted into a pre-existing *Iliad*. For performer and audience, the version of P51 is plausible, traditional in diction, and interesting.

⁴⁷ Lord 2000, 99–123 first traced this in South Slavic heroic poetry. A number of subsequent studies have reported the same phenomenon.

Hesiod.) Two points of interest arise from this brief notice: that Alexandrian connoisseurs thought themselves capable of detecting stylistic differences within hexameter poetry and based their decisions about authorship on this; and that they did not feel bound by other considerations of structure or artistry when they suggested that certain lines did not belong in a poem. Note that this is far different from claiming that Zenodotus and his successors were proto-Analysts in any way. For their decisions about such *atheteses*, as far we can track them through the evidence of scholia, appear to have been shaped with a keen appreciation of the *types* of passage or scene that could contain such “other” material. This is to say that the connoisseurs (poets, critics, and often poet-critics) carried with them a native sense of where one might expand or contract, a sense equal to—perhaps directly derived from—rhapsodic performers themselves.⁴⁸ In the case of separability, therefore, we should treat the intuition of Zenodotus with some respect. In this connection, it is highly significant that the same critic *athetized* the entire *Shield of Achilles* from the *Iliad* (A-scholia *ad Iliad.* 18.483), as he was satisfied with “the summary preface” (κεφαλαιώδης προέκθεσις)—apparently lines 18.478–82, which mention that Hephaestus made a stout shield and decorated it with δαίδαλα πολλά. We do not know whether the two scholia just cited should be harmonized—that is, whether Zenodotus *athetized* the *Iliad* shield *because it too was Hesiodic*. But even if that was not his motive, it remains clear that an Alexandrian could treat a long shield description as separable from its surrounding context.

This brings us to the second category of evidence, the creative habits of rhapsodes. What, after all, would one have done with a separable *Shield of Achilles*? Martin Revermann, in an article on the textual transmission of that *Iliad* passage, suggests that the *Iliadic* shield may, in fact, have been used for separate recitation in performance, as a show-piece or an encore.⁴⁹ Though he does not refer to them, the practice of performing such an individual episode is well attested in other oral poetic traditions.⁵⁰ The *Certamen* of Homer and Hesiod presents the two battling bards “self-segmenting,” as it were, their own poetry, in the interest of pleasing an audience and

⁴⁸ On the possible interaction between rhapsodes and critic-poets, see Hunter 1996, 50–52.

⁴⁹ Revermann 1998.

⁵⁰ This can apply either to segmenting of plot elements or to long runs of description. On Indic, see Flueckiger 1999. One can find parallels from Mongol, Kirghiz, Egyptian, and West African epics; from my fieldwork in Sphakia and Selinos, Crete in 1996 and 2002, I can attest to the practice of segmenting the *Erotokritos* and *Daskaloyiannis* epics.

judge.⁵¹ The much-controverted evidence concerning the performance of Homer at the Panathenaea can show us at least this much, that no one rhapsode ever recited an entire poem.⁵² By definition, then, rhapsodes delivered time-constrained segments. These could either be rounded off, or allowed to dangle with a loose thread, which a succeeding rhapsode might then pick up to stitch the foregoing to his own performance. At any rate, a shield description like that in the *Aspis* or *Iliad* would seem to be the right length for live performance.⁵³

Whatever one's aesthetic judgment on the relative value of the two shield *ekphrasis*s, it seems highly likely that the *Iliad* poet has simply expanded his or her already massive performance by embedding this traditional, separable sub-genre. The shield of Heracles is much more functional in its episode than is that of Achilles. One can easily imagine there being in the repertoire of the rhapsodes a class of such expansions; the genius of the Homeric composers is to vacuum up the sub-genres that naturally occur on their own in the oral poetic surroundings, and put them to new and pointed use. I have argued elsewhere that this is precisely what happens in the case of the "catalogue of women" in *Odyssey* Book 11, or with the genre of speaking to be identified as Instruction of Princes in both the *Odyssey* and the *Theogony*.⁵⁴ What this means, once again, is that the Hesiodic *Aspis* stands a good chance of being an authentic continuator of an older way of performing. On the larger scale, I would assert that what we call Hesiodic poetry is—like the epic cycle and Orphic poetry as well—the unmarked remnant of rhapsodic repertoires. After the rise of Homer as epic *par excellence*, anything non-Homeric could well have been homogenized, in opposition to the marked poetic category, as "Hesiodic." Of course, as G. P. Edwards and others have shown, the verse itself has every claim to be as old or older than the Homeric poems as we have them.⁵⁵ The structures of motif, plot, and even diction can be best viewed as that material which the homogenizing Homeric composers had to

⁵¹ See now for a sophisticated evaluation of this work, Graziosi 2002. For the techniques employed in the *Certamen* and their relation to verse-composition patterns, see Collins 2001b.

⁵² On the interpretation of the evidence for sequenced recitation, see Nagy 2002, 9–22, 43–50.

⁵³ Homeric "books" could also fit a convenient one to three-hour performance slot: on the interrelations of book division, performance, and textual transmission, see the debate in Skaife Jensen 1999.

⁵⁴ See Chapters 8 and 12 above.

⁵⁵ Edwards 1971; Nagy 1992.

work with. Not by accident is *Homêros* the “fitter-together.”⁵⁶ The *Aspis*, by these terms, is most likely akin to the Iliadic shield not as an inferior copy to a superior model, but as two instantiations of a *tour de force* that rhapsodes could choose to do in performance: the “extended armament-*ekphrasis*.” I now want to propose that the strategy of expanding by means of a shield *ekphrasis* is not just what we see in our version of the *Iliad*. It is exactly what is happening in our version of the *Catalogue of Women* attributed to Hesiod. In other words, I want to suggest that the *Aspis* was a part of the *Catalogue* just as much (and as separably) as Achilles’ shield was within the *Iliad*.

Of course, there is no positive proof in the way of manuscript evidence. But there is no real negative proof either. The Oxyrhynchus finds edited by Lobel (fr. 195) do not support a claim either way. They simply confirm a part of what the transmitted *hypothesis* says.⁵⁷ Most critics have automatically assumed that the *Aspis* was composed by some poetaster, who copied or borrowed the Alcmene biography in the *Catalogue* and clumsily pegged onto this the story of Heracles’ fight against Cycnus.⁵⁸ Wilamowitz was the only critic willing to see the situation the other way round: he thought that a separate *Aspis* poet inserted his poem *into* the *Catalogue* (a view which West has tried to rebut, to my mind unsuccessfully).⁵⁹ To my knowledge, no one has suggested that the *Aspis* and *Catalogue* composers were one and the same. An immediate objection might be the following: if the *Aspis* was as integral to the *Catalogue* as the shield to the *Iliad*, why do we have ancient references to them as separate? My response is that one can refer to a portion of any epic by its own episode-name. Thus, in the *Iliad*, we get the *Peira*, the *Teikhoskopia*, or—for the shield—the *Hoplopoiia*. In this light, the *Aspis* would be what rhapsodes and their near relations, the critics, called that part of the

⁵⁶ Nagy 1990, 373. The creation (probably in rhapsodic lore) of Homer and Hesiod as two primeval poetic figures accords with later critical practice, whereby what was not by one had to be by the other. It worked both ways: Aristarchus (like Zenodotus, it seems) condemned as un-Homeric any passages he suspected of having a Hesiodic character: see Pfeiffer 1968, 220.

⁵⁷ Glenn Most, pointing to the specification in the *hypothesis* that the first fifty-six lines of the *Aspis* were in the *Catalogue*, argued in the May 2002 Craven Seminar at Cambridge that the remainder of the *Aspis* as we have it therefore could *not* have been in the poem. More cautiously, we might say that a version of the *Catalogue* as known to the composer of the *hypothesis* writer only featured part of the *Aspis*. What was said above concerning telescoping and expansion applies here as well: just as some *Iliad* copies omitted the Catalogue of Ships—and might have copied performance habits in so doing—some instances of the *Catalogue of Women* may have featured an extended, others a shortened, *Aspis*.

⁵⁸ Allen 1924, 79, for example, who says, “the *Aspis* has no allusion to determine the date of the *Catalogue* (from which its first portion was taken).”

⁵⁹ Wilamowitz 1905; Merkelbach–West 1965, 300 n. 3.

Catalogue where one went all out and did a 400-line riff. Then again, there is the role of Zenodotus. Why did his successor Aristophanes of Byzantium need to worry about whether the *Aspis* was or was not “Hesiodic,” unless earlier scholars had brought up the issue? If the earlier critic Zenodotus decided, as he did with the Iliadic shield, that the *Catalogue* version, too, was separable, the tradition of treating the *Aspis* as a free-standing composition could have begun just before the time of Aristophanes.

Now the problem will be to show how the poetry of the *Aspis* is like the rest of the *Catalogue* and therefore could have fitted inside it. Here, my third category of evidence comes into play, that with which I began this paper—the trash aesthetic and its preferences in theme and structure. (The dating of the two pieces, by the way, is not a problem, since critics have independently placed the *Catalogue* and the *Aspis* in exactly the same decades, the first quarter of the sixth century BCE, on the basis of historical and genealogical details, including traces of Delphic propaganda.)⁶⁰ West, who provides good arguments for the *Catalogue* dating, is also the one to whom we can turn for support for the notion that the whole composition must have been a rather pulpy poem. Each of its five books seems to have comprised around 1,100 verses. And—given its mythic material—the poem’s narration will have included, at the very least, a god-defier (Salmoneus), Siamese twins, at least two shape-shifters (one of whom, in bee-form, gets nailed by Heracles in classic B-movie fashion, just when he alights on a chariot-yoke), a man who devours himself, and raving mad girl gangs.⁶¹ From the scrappy remains of the *Catalogue* we can see, first, that Heracles flitted in and out constantly, reminding one of his continual present-absence in Apollonius’ epic.⁶² A number of episodes expanded into digressions about Heracles. Second, we see that episodes can be quite long and complex. For instance, the Suitors of Helen section, as we have it, is already 180 lines long and the whole may have been much larger.⁶³ This section also seems to come at book-end. The *Aspis* would have made a fine ending, as well, in its case to Book 4. As West notes, the *Catalogue* poet likes to finish off books expansively.

Turning now to the fourth and final sort of evidence, the texture of the respective texts, we can glance at the now famous description of the seasons

⁶⁰ For details, see Janko 1986.

⁶¹ A poem you could pitch to Ms. Wishman in a New York minute, seeing as she already did the movie version of a kind of *Catalogue: Bad Girls Go to Hell*.

⁶² On Heracles in the *Catalogue*, see Haubold 2005.

⁶³ Cf. Cingano 2005.

and the behavior of snakes with which our text of the *Catalogue* ends (fr. 204.124–42). The natural lore has a specific role: it pins down the time of events through reference to the occurrences of seasons, in the style of the *Works and Days*. The event that this passage refers to has to do with the punishment of a *hubristês* (see line 137—the snake itself?). Compare *Aspis* lines 393–401:

ἦμος δὲ χλοερῶ κυανόπτερος ἡχέτα τέτιξ
 ὅζω ἐφεζόμενος θέρος ἀνθρώποισιν αἰίδειν
 ἄρχεται, ὃ τε πόσις καὶ βρώσις θῆλυς ἐέρση, 395
 καὶ τε πανημέριός τε καὶ ἡῶς χέει αὐδὴν
 ἴδει ἐν αἰνοτάτῳ, ὅτε τε χρόα Σείριος ἄξει,
 τῆμος δὴ κέγχροισι πέρι γλῶχες τελέθουσι
 τοὺς τε θέρει σπείρουσιν, ὅτ' ὄμφακες αἰόλλονται,
 οἷα Διώνυσος δῶν' ἀνδράσι χάσμα καὶ ἄχθος· 400
 τὴν ὥρην μάρναντο, πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει.

And when the dark-winged whirring grasshopper, perched on a green shoot, begins to sing of summer to men—his food and drink is the dainty dew—and all day long from dawn pours forth his voice in the deadliest heat, when Sirius scorches the flesh (then the beard grows upon the millet which men sow in summer), when the crude grapes which Dionysus gave to men—a joy and a sorrow both—begin to color, in that season they fought, and loud rose the clamor.

Not only is this a digression on nature-lore; it too, unusually, pins down the time of a single event—Heracles' fight with Apollo's enemy, Cycnus, a *hubristês* if ever there was one. The diction surrounding the *Catalogue* snake (fr. 240.135–37) resembles closely *Aspis* snake descriptions (cf. 160–7); there may be only so many ways to put skin on a snake, but given other patterns so far, this counts.

Do I overrate the *Aspis* by finding for it a home in the *Catalogue of Women*? Or am I trashing the *Catalogue* by smuggling into it this debased product of the rhapsodic imagination at its bloodiest? The classic contradiction of the study of pop culture raises its head. Maybe we should let the *Aspis* lie and not any further suck the flamboyancy out of it. After all, as Clive Bloom puts it: “Pulp never went to school and hates the academy.”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Bloom 1996, 134.

IV

THE BACKWARD LOOK

KEENS FROM THE ABSENT CHORUS TROY TO ULSTER¹

I.

What experimentation is to science, comparison should be to philology—a way to test hypotheses and produce new ones that account for more of the data, more economically. What one chooses to compare, of course, will affect the results. On one end of the spectrum lies the tracing of curious resemblances among otherwise isolated words, motifs, or customs, and the urge to weave around these an intriguing narrative, either of primitive origins, long-distance cultural contact, or deep genetic relationship.² The nineteenth century's fascination with atomistic and often obscure comparanda gave way in the twentieth century to a more dependable tendency to compare total structures, linguistics leading the way to the other end of the spectrum, with anthropology trailing some decades later.³ Neither method was specifically designed for the study of verbal art, although Frazer's great work was prompted by a scene in Vergil's *Aeneid* and Lévi-Strauss' best-known

¹ Originally published in *Western Folklore* 62, no. 1 (2003): 119–42. Also reprinted with additional notes in *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond*, ed. A. Suter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 118–38.

² Frazer is of course the major figure. “He could always find a minor superstition among frolicking harvesters or New Year celebrants to match any more grandiose theme. The switches of scale give us a sense of flippancy”: Douglas 1982, 284. Her article offers a balanced assessment of Frazer's continuing importance (even after Wittgenstein's critique). Ackerman 1987 well analyzes the connection between the scholar's anthropology and his Classical philology. Hyman 1959 shows how Frazer's intellectual roots tangled with those of a number of other Victorian figures. On the aims and methods of Frazer's contemporaries, see Stocking 1987.

³ A well-known story, concisely told by Culler 1975, 3–54 and Donato 1972. Detienne 2000 traces the concomitant narrowing of the range of comparanda that this involved.

article starts with the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles. Yet the philologist studying ancient or medieval texts has much to gain from a controlled use of ethnographic comparisons of both types—those based on telling Frazerian detail (now once again in fashion), as well as those concerned with global structures.⁴ In fact, a twenty-first-century philology *without* strong affiliations to social anthropology, folkloristics, and performance study is increasingly untenable and in danger of exhausting itself on hermetic quests into the endlessly intertextual.⁵

An explication of two puzzling passages, one ancient Greek, the other medieval Irish, can illustrate the advantages of comparing old texts and modern cultures. My approach in this paper will be quadrilateral: modern Greek evidence illumines the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; ancient Greek social practices can shed light on the medieval Irish *Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó*; and a famous modern Irish poem might be fruitfully reconsidered along the way. Underlying this approach is one key assumption: that typologically similar institutions often generate similar rhetoric and poetics.⁶ That is to say, the details of the individual document or performance (the object of one sort of ethnography) can be brought into touch with larger structures (objects of a different sort of anthropology) so that we do not lose sight of either end of the data spectrum and we end up clarifying both in the process. Where our evidence from pre-modern periods is patchy and unsure, as is often the case with Greek and Irish materials, we can still look to mutually illuminating models for performances, ancient, medieval, and modern.⁷

⁴ On the rediscovery of Frazer's rich (if not "thick") description and resemblances to Geertzian practice, see Boon 1982.

⁵ For an incisive evaluation of intertextuality studies in Classics, see Edmunds 2001. Responses to the sterility of pure intertextuality, within my discipline, have gone in two directions: toward questioning the ways in which we construct any individual text (see Sharrock and Morales 2000) and toward broadening the text's boundaries by way of attention to social context (whether through New Historicism or the slightly softer "cultural poetics," on which see Kurke and Dougherty 1993). On the modern relationship between anthropology and Classics, see Martin 2008.

⁶ For an illustration of the principle in connection with a different pairing of Greek and Irish texts, see Martin 1984a with further bibliography on the approach. Masterly demonstrations of the method can be found in Nagy 1990 and 1999b; Watkins 1995; and Benveniste 1969/1973. On finishing this article, I came across McCone 1984, 27, whose formulation, applied to Greek and Irish as well, nicely fits the view expressed here.

⁷ I find an encouraging defense of my sort of intellectual poaching in Guneratne 1999: "To be a successful fieldworker, one must be at least a little uninhibited about being conspicuous and unwittingly violating local norms, because the nature of fieldwork makes this virtually inevitable." She contrasts with this the diffidence she felt accompanying her husband during fieldwork in Nepal. As a para-ethnographer and part-time Celticist, I was honored yet abashed to have been included in the UCLA conference on performance models (February 2001) organized by Józsi Nagy. I wish to thank

Such models do not “prove” anything about the texts in question, but might provide better hypotheses—all that one can ask of most investigations.

First, the ancient Greek conundrum, a passage that was controversial already in the third century BCE.⁸ In Book Four of the *Odyssey*, the hero Menelaus, now safely home from the Trojan War, reminisces, for the benefit of his young guest Telemachus, about the exploits of Odysseus in the final days of the siege. He recalls how his own wife, the exquisite Helen, nearly ruined Odysseus’ plan of the Trojan Horse through a strange feat of ventriloquism—or so it seemed—enacted on the night that the Greek heroes lay hidden inside, waiting to make their sneak attack (*Odyssey* 4.277–79):

τρίς δὲ περίστειξας κοῖλον λόχον ἀμπαφόωσα,
ἐκ δ’ ὀνομακλήδην Δαναῶν ὀνόμαζες ἀρίστους,
πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ’ ἀλόχοισιν

Three times you walked around, handling the hollow ambush;
you called by name the best of the Danaans,
in voice resembling all the Argives’ wives.⁹

Only the determination of Odysseus, claims his old friend, prevented the warriors with him inside the Horse from crying out in response to Helen’s near-fatal provocation. This extremely odd behavior by the Spartan queen has usually been connected with Helen’s alleged resemblance to a sorceress, as scholars attempt to translate her adeptness at drug administration into something more sinister. Yet there is no other evidence to point the audience in that direction.¹⁰ Then again, one can anachronistically psychologize Helen’s character to ask why she nearly betrayed the Greeks (fear of her new Trojan relatives by marriage, Stockholm syndrome, etc.).¹¹ But if we wish to base our explications on the immediate and more appropriate level of traditional conventions within archaic Greek poetry, it is important to inquire

him for the kind invitation to that fascinating event, at which my position was often more that of the anthropologist’s spouse.

⁸ It appears that the Alexandrian critic Aristarchus questioned the authenticity of several lines in the passage, including the detail of Helen’s mimetic behavior: see Heubeck et al. 1988, 211–12, where it is suggested that “there may be more to this curious detail than meets the eye.”

⁹ Translations of all Greek and Irish passages in this paper are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹⁰ Just before Menelaus tells his rather pointed story about her, Helen spikes the party’s drinks with a powerful Egyptian pain-killer (*Odyssey* 4.220–32). Austin 1994, 77–81 removes the first scene from the realm of sorcery but reads lines 277–79 as celebrating Helen for her “daimonic powers”; see further Suzuki 1989, 66.

¹¹ For bibliography and discussion see Suzuki 1989, 69.

first what other scenes this passage resembles in motif or diction. This is to ask, in another way: what might have resonated with a traditional Greek audience of oral-poetic craft, one aware of multiple performances that repeatedly featured the same characters, tales, and phrases? A close resemblance has sometimes been noted with the similar ventriloquist abilities of the maidens of Delos in the *Hymn to Apollo*, an anonymous composition in epic hexameter style, perhaps dating from the sixth century BCE. The marvel created by these young women is described as part of a longer passage celebrating the central festival of Apollo on his rocky sacred island, an event attended by travelers from all the Ionian city-states (*Hymn to Apollo* 160–64):¹²

μνησάμεναι ἀνδρῶν τε παλαιῶν ἢ δὲ γυναικῶν
ῥυθμὸν ἀείδουσιν, θέλγουσι δὲ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων.
πάντων δ' ἀνθρώπων φωνᾶς καὶ κρεμβαλιαστῶν
μιμεῖσθ' ἴσασιν φαίη δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἕκαστος
φθέγγεσθ'· οὕτω σφιν καλὴ συνάρεθρεν ἀοιδή.

Calling to mind men of old and women
they sing a hymn and charm the tribes of mankind.
The voices and rhythm of all people they know to imitate;
each might say that he himself was speaking:
that is how fine their song fits together.

At the risk of explaining *obscurum per obscurius*, we can note that both performances, Helen's and the maidens', involve miming another's voice. But the lone figure of Helen is said in the *Odyssey* specifically to have imitated the voices of women, the wives of the Greek heroes inside the wooden horse. By contrast, the chorus of Delian women sings *about* a plurality, both men and women of an earlier age. Theirs is an epicizing act, overtly referring to distant heroic characters, yet their performance apparently represents the voices of all kinds of people actually present. The magic of the Delians' song lies in its ability to involve the audience so completely that each listener feels the closest affinity with the speaker—a beautiful image of the ultimate merging

¹² On the controversies surrounding this complex poem, which seems to offer a glimpse of epic song performed by female choruses, as well as a stylized reference to the (mythologized) Homeric poet himself, see Lonsdale 1995; Nagy 1995; and Martin 2000b; for more on the vocal abilities of the Delian maidens, see Martin 2001b with further bibliography. For the translation “rhythm” of Greek *krembaliastus* in line 163 (usually taken as “chattering” or “clacking”), I am indebted to Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi's work (2009) concerning dance-concepts in this passage.

of singer and rapt audience.¹³ That the stress falls on the *choral* nature of the maidens' performance can be deduced from the verb *sunarêren*, "fits together," which denotes a joint production at the same time as it emblemizes, in context, the perfect "fit" between performers and listeners. In this highly charged scene, a distinctly Greek poetic ideology finds its summation: choral song has the power of modeling and enabling community cohesion.¹⁴ This force of the preverb *sun*, "together," can be paralleled with reference to musical and vocal performance, in a number of compound words, such as the verb *sumphônein*, which ultimately gives us "symphony."

The differences between these two vocal events strike one as much as the similarities: Helen's seems not to be a canonical performance, but a spooky sort of improvisation. After all, the only "audience" is either the fearful concealed Greeks, or Helen's latest husband, the Trojan Deiphobus, who accompanied her to see the Horse. And where is the pleasure one expects, the regular concomitant of women's singing in Greek poetry? Furthermore, is it not perverse that one woman becomes a chorus? Then again, we might recall that Helen is herself a singular being, a divinity, outside epic, and a multiform of the Indo-European dawn goddess. Her abilities and practices have the right to be oddly different.¹⁵

The closest parallel for women's "choral" performance of this type within Homeric epic takes us to the end of the *Odyssey*. There it is not mortal women, however, but the Muses who once sang an antiphonal lament over the body of Achilles, toward the end of the war. As the shade of Agamemnon recounts the scene to Achilles, his companion now in Hades (*Odyssey* 24.58–62):¹⁶

ἀμφὶ δέ σ' ἔστησαν κοῦραι ἁλίοιο γέροντος
οἴκτ' ὀλοφυρόμεναι, περὶ δ' ἄμβροτα εἴματα ἔσσαν.
Μοῦσαι δ' ἐννέα πᾶσαι ἀμειβόμεναι ὀπὶ καλῇ
θρήνεον· ἔνθα κεν οὐ τιν' ἀδάκρυτόν γ' ἐνόησας
Ἀργείων· τοῖον γὰρ ὑπώρροε Μοῦσα λίγεια.

¹³ Archaic Greek myth and poetics, from the stories of Orpheus to depictions of court bards in the *Odyssey*, fantasize in a number of ways about the power of song: good recent examinations of the topic are Segal 1994 and Aloni 1998.

¹⁴ On the concept, see Calame 2001, 207–63 and Nagy 1995. The civic importance of choruses for an ancient city-state was repeatedly acknowledged by Plato in the *Laws* (e.g., 796b–c). On the institution in fifth-century Athens, see Wilson 2000.

¹⁵ On the ambiguous status of Helen, as mortal and/or goddess, see Clader 1976 passim and Austin 1994, 10–12.

¹⁶ This is another passage subjected to critical doubts since antiquity.

Around you stood the daughters of the Old Man of the Sea,
 pitifully wailing, and clothed you in immortal clothes.
 The Muses, all nine, with responsive lovely voice
 made the lament. Then you might have seen
 no Argive tearless—in such a way did the clear-toned Muse arouse
 them.

Some critics have tried to explain the singular Muse of line 62 as a type of abstraction or even an (unparalleled) metonymy for “music,” but the more functional explanation, through ethnopoetics, would interpret the scenario differently. One Muse leads the group and responds to them, as they respond to her and to one another, *ameibomenai opi kalêi*.¹⁷ In this interpretation, the divine performance recounted in *Odyssey* 24 would match lament performance as attested in medieval and modern, as well as other ancient texts.¹⁸ It might show, in addition, a performance context (responsive song) whereby “one” and “many” are enabled to exchange roles, so that the boundaries of personality are blurred. But how can this lament at the death of Achilles help us to understand the original object of attention, Helen’s weird imitative powers as she circles the Trojan Horse?

To take stock thus far: the Delian maidens present us with a chorus that can imitate the voices of others; so can Helen, but she is not a chorus. The Muses, on the other hand, operate in such a way that individual and choral voice naturally alternate; the vocal relation is symbiotic. If Helen is conceptualized as an *exarkhousa*—a chorus-leader—we might be able to imagine that she crystallizes the power of choral song, within her own individual performance, in effect imitating call *and* response. But this suggestion seems to lead us into a further speculation, namely that Helen is somehow connected with the performance, specifically, of lament, for that is the precise context—indeed, the only context—in which call-and-response is seen to function

¹⁷ Russo et al. 1992, 366–67 traces the interpretive genealogy and proposes tentatively that the singular Muse is an *exarkhousa* or chorus-leader. Following them, I read *hupôrore* as transitive, but would submit that the understood object is *the lament of the other Muses*, as fellow chorus-members (not the Greek heroes who observed this lament). Compare *Iliad* 24.760 (of Hecabe’s lament), Ὡς ἔφατο κλαίονσα, γόον δ’ ἀλίαντον ὄρινε (“So she spoke, weeping, and raised incessant lamentation”), where the same verb takes as explicit object the noun *goos* (a non-musical, non-professional lament, as opposed to a *thrênos*, which the Muses performed over Achilles in *Odyssey* 24.61). The introduction to Hecabe’s words significantly specifies that she is the *exarkhousa*, leader of the performance: *Iliad* 24.747: τῇσιν δ’ αὖθ’ Ἑκάβη ἀδινού ἐξήρχε γόοιο (“For them, Hecabe started out the pulsing lament”). The proposal is in line with the dynamics within modern lament, as sketched further below.

¹⁸ Choral respension to a single female leader is well documented: see Alexiou 1974 *passim*.

in Homeric descriptions of song. I suggest that, odd as it may seem at first sight, Helen, as we see her in Homeric verse, possesses a close affinity for lament. Furthermore, it can be demonstrated that the diction and rhetoric used by the Homeric poet to depict her in several key passages are permeated with markers of the lament genre. In addition, if we observe modern rural Greek practices of lament, as ethnographers have recorded them, a number of other puzzling features of Helen's character and story cohere in a new way. If Helen is thought of as an expert lamenter, a professional keener, her ambiguous status, mantic abilities, and ghostly double can start to make sense. Finally, we can begin to understand what she was doing that dark night outside the Horse. Once we acknowledge the key role of choral poetry in the art of lament, we can understand the Irish material, even without reverting to reconstructions of Indo-European institutions, much as those have their attractions.

II.

To establish Helen as keener, we need to work from both ends, drawing on traditional philological analysis of the ancient text (especially by comparing phraseology) but, equally, on contemporary examinations of a social-poetic genre, the *moiroloyia* (literally "fate-saying"), an enduring folk tradition on which there is now much careful ethnographic work. Scholarship of the past twenty-five years seeks to analyze Greek laments in terms of social categories and gender relationships; the role of performers in village life; and the attitudes towards kin, death, religion, and work that these songs embody. I rely in particular on the work of Nadia Seremetakis; among others studying lament and grief within Greek culture whose work has influenced me are Loring Danforth, Neni Panourgia, Gail Holst, Margaret Alexiou, and Ioannis Tsouderos.¹⁹ For analysis of the ancient text, as will become clear, I rely on the fundamental insights of Milman Parry, Albert Lord, and the scholars who have followed in their tracks in treating Homeric epic as the product of an oral-traditional art.²⁰

¹⁹ I take this opportunity to thank the last four scholars named here for personal communications over the past few years on various aspects of Greek lament. Helpful also on the lament tradition are: Caraveli-Chavez 1980; Kassis 1985; Morgan 1973; Moutsios 1995; and Skopetea 1972. [Update 2017: on lament, see further Dué 2002; Tsagalis 2004; Fishman 2008; and the essays in Suter 2008.]

²⁰ The deeply traditional and precise nature of Homeric diction has been most fruitfully demonstrated by Gregory Nagy in a series of books and articles (see especially 1999b, 1990, 1996a). See

Helen makes one overt formal lament in the *Iliad*.²¹ In a striking poetic moment, at the very end of the poem, the woman who caused the Trojan War weeps over the body of Hector, her brother-in-law (*Iliad* 24.761–75):

τῇσι δ' ἔπειθ' Ἑλένη τριτάτη ἐξῆρχε γόοιο·
 Ἔκτορ ἐμῷ θυμῷ δαέρων πολὺ φίλτατε πάντων,
 ἧ μὲν μοι πόσις ἐστὶν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής,
 ὅς μ' ἄγαγε Τροίηνδ' ὥς πρὶν ὄφελλον ὀλέσθαι.
 ἦδη γὰρ νῦν μοι τόδε εἰκοστὸν ἔτος ἐστὶν 765
 ἐξ οὗ κεῖθεν ἔβην καὶ ἐμῆς ἀπελήλυθα πάτρη·
 ἀλλ' οὐ πῶ σεῦ ἄκουσα κακὸν ἔπος οὐδ' ἀσύφηλον·
 ἀλλ' εἴ τίς με καὶ ἄλλος ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐνίπτοι
 δαέρων ἢ γαλόων ἢ εἰνατέρων εὐπέπλων,
 ἧ ἐκυρή, ἐκυρὸς δὲ πατὴρ ὥς ἦπιος αἰεὶ, 770
 ἀλλὰ σὺ τὸν ἐπέεσσι παραιφάμενος κατέρυκες
 σῇ τ' ἀγανοφροσύνῃ καὶ σοῖς ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσι.
 τῷ σέ θ' ἅμα κλαίω καὶ ἔμ' ἄμμορον ἀχνυμένη κῆρ·
 οὐ γὰρ τίς μοι ἔτ' ἄλλος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ
 ἦπιος οὐδὲ φίλος, πάντες δέ με πεφρίκασιν. 775

Helen, the third, began to lead their lamentation.
 “Hector, dearest to my heart of all my brothers-in-law,
 truly, Alexandros the godlike is my husband
 who led me to Troy—I should have died before then!
 Already now this is the twentieth year for me
 since I came from there and left my native land;
 But never did I hear from you an ill, degrading word.
 Instead, if anyone else in the palace would curse me
 a sister-in-law, brother-in-law, or one’s long-robed wife,
 or my mother-in-law (father-in-law was gentle as a father),
 it was you who restrained them with words you spoke aside,
 with your gentle-minded way and gentle words.
 So I weep for you and at the same time, myself—luckless one!—
 grieved at heart.
 For there is no one else for me, in broad Troy, mild or friendly:
 all are bristling in fear at me.

also Benveniste 1969/1973, and for a clear presentation of the theory underlying such analyses, the several works by J. M. Foley 1988, 1991, 1999.

²¹ For full analysis of the differences in Homeric rhetoric between formal and improvised laments, see Tsagalis 1998.

Helen has the right to lament publicly at this moment because she is kin by marriage to the murdered Hector. But by the time we see her in this official role of mourner at the end of the poem, Helen's language sounds familiar. The reason emerges when we go beyond an analysis restricted to speeches specifically designated as laments (*goos* or *thrênos*) and look instead at the language of Helen elsewhere in the poem. Her other speeches, even though they are not called laments, more often than not contain the strategies and phrases of that genre. In other words, Helen in her appearances earlier in the *Iliad* would sound very much like a lamenting woman to the ears of a traditional audience aware of the deployment of speech motifs.²² Primary evidence comes from Book 3, when Helen first makes her entrance in the *Iliad*. At the moment she is called to come to the walls of Troy to see her present husband Paris battle her former husband Menelaus, Helen is weaving a story-cloth depicting the sufferings that the warriors have already undergone for her sake (*Iliad* 3.125–28). Thus, even before she utters a word, Helen is placed in the context of lamentation.²³ When she reaches the wall and begins to respond to Priam's questions about the Greek warriors whom they view on the plain below, the speech has an unmistakable tone that derives from lament phrasings (underlined below) found elsewhere in Homeric epic (*Iliad* 3.171–80):

Τὸν δ' Ἑλένη μῦθοισιν ἀμείβετο διὰ γυναικῶν
αἰδοῖός τέ μοι ἔσσι φίλε ἔκυρὲ δεινός τε
 ὥς ὄφελεν θάνατός μοι ἄδεῖν κακὸς ὅπποτε δεῦρο
 υἱεῖ σῶ ἐπόμεν θάλαμον γνωτούς τε λιποῦσα
παῖδά τε τηλυγέτην καὶ ὀμηλικίην ἐρατεινήν. 175
 ἀλλὰ τά γ' οὐκ ἐγένοντο· τὸ καὶ κλαίουσα τέτηκα.
 τοῦτο δέ τοι ἐρέω ὃ μ' ἀνείρεαι ἡδὲ μεταλλάς·
 οὗτός γ' Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων,
 ἀμφοτέρων βασιλεύς τ' ἀγαθὸς κρατερός τ' αἰχμητής·
 δαήρ αὐτ' ἐμὸς ἔσχε κυνώπιδος, εἵ ποτ' ἔην γε. 180

²² On the notions of speech-motifs and speech-genres as structuring devices within Homeric mimesis, see Martin 1989 and 1997a.

²³ The word *aethlous*, “trial” is not only used to describe prize-contests, but is a formulaic complement for *algea* in the phrase *algea paskhein* “to undergo griefs.” On the polyvalence of the scene, see Austin 1994, 37–41 with further bibliography. He does not note lament associations, however.

Helen, glorious among women, answered him with strong words:
 “Dear father-in-law, you are revered and inspire awe.
 Evil death should have been my pleasure when I followed your son
 here, leaving marriage-chamber, kin, dear daughter, my age-mates.
 But that was not to be. I melt with weeping for it.
 This, though, I’ll tell you—which you ask and inquire:
 Over there is the wide-ruling son of Atreus, Agamemnon—
 good king and strong fighter, both. And as well, to me,
 shameful bitch, he was brother-in-law—if all that ever happened.”

In line 180: Helen refers to Agamemnon as one “who used to be” (with marked iterative-imperfect form ἔσκε) and adds “if he/it ever was”—a formulaic phrase regularly used of the absent or dead. Both recur in *Odyssey* 19.315 when Penelope recalls Odysseus, who she thinks has perished:²⁴

οἷος Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔσκε μετ’ ἀνδράσιν, εἴ ποτ’ ἔην γε

The way Odysseus used to be among men, if ever he was ...

Although Agamemnon is very much alive and in view, Helen’s diction treats her own past, and its figures, as the dead object. We can hear in this a brilliant poetic re-working of a traditional speech-motif from another genre (lament), an innovatory enrichment pushing the poetic system to new expressiveness and characterizing Helen in the process.

In line 172: Helen’s use of vocatives, *phile* (*sw)ekure d(w)einos te. The hexameter meter can only be scanned correctly here if we assume that the necessary long syllabic quantities (underlined above) were generated by the earlier presence of consonants that were lost in most dialects before the earliest possible fixation of any portion of the Homeric text (approximately 750 BCE). In other words, this double vocative, “dear father-in-law and held in awe,” must have been already an old phrase in some ancient poetic tradition. What does this have to do with lament? Although it is certainly possible that such frozen archaic phrases were preserved in a number of contexts, one is struck by the predominant occurrence of designations of kin within the genre of lament as it is now practiced in Greece, especially among the women of Inner Mani. From fieldwork, Gareth Morgan and Nadia Seremetakis report that lament sessions regularly begin with highly conventionalized traditional greetings exchanged among kin, using kin-titles—some of them not in common speech

²⁴ See also Priam about the dead Hector, *Iliad* 24.425–28. On the resonance of the phrase, see Kirk 1985b, 290–91.

usage—rather than proper names. Thus *kafí mou*—or *adhelfoúla mou*—can be used not just for blood sisters (the literal meaning in modern Greek) but any female kin. Indeed, the lament performance arising in these modern occasions is a primary way of establishing and articulating the speaker’s exact sentiment for degrees of kin affection, precisely through such designations. This is a striking case of social poetics in action.²⁵ In this regard, it is worth noting that Helen’s single overt speech of lament (cited above) specifically singles out Priam as her “good” in-law: “father-in-law was gentle as a father” (*Iliad* 24.770). The theme of Helen’s relationship to Priam, which emerges fully in her lament for Hector at the poem’s finale, revolves around the same phrase that we see in a highly traditional occurrence earlier in the poem. To put it pointedly, “dear father-in-law—*phile* (**sw*)*ekure*—may well have arisen in a formal lament like the Book 24 example and have been reused innovatively in the scene of Helen and Priam on the wall.

Rather than continue the dense philological demonstration to show that Helen is *always* using lament language within the *Iliad* and thus would sound like a constant and even professional mourner to an attuned audience, I turn now to three implications of the picture I have been drawing, of Helen as keening woman.²⁶

1. Helen’s mantic abilities can be understood if we retroject to archaic Greek times a belief found today concerning modern Greek lament experts. The modern Greek lore on lamenters makes them also consistently adept at interpreting signs that warn of imminent death. In the view of Seremetakis and others, they are the modern equivalent of diviners. Turning to *Odyssey* 15.172–73, let us imagine that an ancient lamenter might also have been credited with this capacity. Helen says:

“κλῦτέ μεν αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μαντεύσομαι, ὥς ἐνὶ θυμῷ
ἄθάνατοι βάλλουσι καὶ ὥς τελέεσθαι οἶώ.”

²⁵ Seremetakis 1991, 86–92; Morgan 1973.

²⁶ Cf. further *Iliad* 6.343–58: Helen denigrates Paris in front of Hector in a speech filled with obvious mourning imagery applied to her own wished-for death. The blame elements in a “lament” speech are even clearer at *Iliad* 3.426–38, when she hurls a *mûthos* at Paris and wishes that he had died in his recent duel with Menelaus. A solution to the somewhat disturbing co-occurrence of blame and lament elements can flow from the evidence of modern Maniot laments, about which Holst-Warhaft 1992, 75–97 reports that movement between the themes of grief and revenge often occurs in the same song; see also Seremetakis 1991, 126–58 on violence as a topic in *moirologia*. Even in cases where death has been natural, the widow can blame the deceased for abandoning her to the cruelties of life without his protection. Death is figured as desertion; cf. Caraveli-Chavez 1980, 137–38.

“Listen—I will act as prophet [*manteusomai*], the way the gods put it in my spirit and I think it will turn out.”

Odysseus will come home, she says, and punish the suitors just as an eagle has appeared and snatched a goose in the sight of all. Helen’s ability to foresee the future and the persuasive ability she has at this, may well stem from her role as the paradigmatic lamenter for the heroic age. What I am suggesting can contribute to an economy of explanation. There is no need to resort to the rather *ad hoc* explanations that have depicted Helen as a witch. Knowing the poetics of a social institution and retrojecting them, we can explain two aspects of Helen’s characterization through one assumption.

2. A second worrisome passage in the *Odyssey* can also be clarified in this way. The following lines have remained enigmatic, despite being a center of scholarly attention in recent years.²⁷ On her first entrance in the epic, Helen notices the newly-arrived Telemachus with Nestor’s son Peisistratus and says (*Odyssey* 4.138–40):

“ἴδμεν δὴ, Μενέλαε διοτρεφές, οἳ τινες οἷδε
ἀνδρῶν εὐχετόωνται ἱκανέμεν ἡμέτερον δῶ;
ψεύσομαι ἢ ἔτυμον ἐρέω; κέλεται δέ με θυμός.

Menelaus, god-nourished, do we know who these claim
to be, among mortals and who have reached our home?
Shall I tell a lie, or speak the truth? My heart commands me.

As the lines that immediately follow these show, Helen has already divined, from his looks, that the guest is the son of her old acquaintance Odysseus. But what is the force of “Shall I tell a lie ...”? The words have inevitably prompted comparison with those of other enigmatic females, in a passage that shares similar poetic diction—the Muses’ own declaration to Hesiod in the beginning of the *Theogony* (27–28):²⁸

“ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
ἴδμεν δ’ εὖτ’ ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.”

Here, the Muses, less tentatively, assert: “We know how to say many lies like true things, and when we want, we know how to sing truths.” But do

²⁷ Heubeck et al. 1988, 203.

²⁸ Ferrari 1988 is the most sensible view of the debate over the alleged deconstructive import of this couplet.

they tell the truth to Hesiod? And what does Helen's heart command her? Why is the disjunction of truth or fiction even made problematic in both passages? It is in connecting these apparently isolated puzzles in archaic Greek poetry that the value of a "performance model" attested from fieldwork in modern Greece can be shown. In a Maniot Greek lament recorded by Nadia Seremetakis in the mid-1980s we hear:

E, Alogháko, éla kondá
na ze ta léou na t'aghrikás,
alíthia léou ni psémata?

Alogako, come near,
so I can tell you, so you can hear:
am I speaking the truth or lies? ²⁹

What the modern ethnographer can make clear, however, is what we can never directly recover from the ancient text: the context and force of this trope in actual performance. "Am I telling truth or lies," she shows, is a rhetorical convention of the modern lament. It is a powerful, idiomatic expression that simply *asserts the truth* of what the speaker says: i.e., the lamenter is *not* telling lies.

3. But we should not characterize this as merely an assertion. To quote Seremetakis on the full force of the lament and its choral patterning: "The truth claims that arise from the ritual ... depend on the emotional force of pain, and the *jural force of antiphonic confirmation* [my emphasis]. By stating that they cannot properly sing laments without the help of others, Maniot women reveal that pain, in order to be rendered valid, has to be socially constructed in antiphonic relations. Antiphony is a jural and historicizing structure." In other words, the assertion of truth is the prime marker for what the entire ritual undertakes to accomplish. Lament, in the words of the fieldworker, "has a built-in record keeping function."³⁰ Once we realize, with the help of ethnography, that choral performance is not purely an aesthetic choice, but of the essence in lament, we can return to the passage with which we began: Helen "doing all the voices," as she circumambulates the Trojan Horse. It has not to my knowledge been noticed that the closest formulaic line to the description of Helen's action (*Odyssey* 4.278: ἐκ δ' ὀνομακλήδην Δαναῶν ὀνόμαζες ἀρίστους, "You

²⁹ Seremetakis 1991, 103. Note that even surface lexical expressions (from *alêthes* and *pseudos*) remain constant over 2500 years of Greek performances.

³⁰ Seremetakis 1991, 120.

called by name the best of the Danaans”) occurs in *Iliad* 22.415, precisely when Priam laments Hector:

ἐξονομακλήδην ὀνομάζων ἄνδρα ἕκαστον

calling out each man by name

There, the “calling out” of individual names is a chilling part of the very public performance of Priam’s grief by the old man himself. The comparative evidence of Maniot lament, meanwhile, shows that this calling out, either of living or dead, is an expected, conventional part of a lament performance.³¹ What was Helen doing that dark night? Perhaps what she did was staged as a lament. This would fit the character that she had constructed already for her Trojan audience (recall her speech behavior in *Iliad* Book 3) and that she needed to maintain. At the same time, this would have been a frustrating and excruciating performance for another audience, the Achaean warriors hidden inside the horse. I suggest that in Helen’s command performance, she becomes the keener *and* chorus, a lone choral-leader calling out the dead. She provides the voices that would actually have lamented individual heroes had their wives been present (and were they already dead). But in this case the lament *for* the dead, like the call of the Sirens, is a summons *to* death unless one resists it.

To put it briefly, Helen is so closely associated with lament in Greek tradition that she becomes its metonym. I would submit that this phenomenon can be extended into a principle for traditional poetics as a whole: one character can embody a genre. It happens that lament, this antiphonal, foundational speech-act, can be represented in archaic Greece as the original authorizing act that lies behind *all* poetry of commemoration.³² That may be why the Muses are women, for only women regularly take the professional role of praising and mourning the dead. It should not surprise us, then, that the Muses in Hesiod (*Theogony* 26), on the verge of declaring their powers, bandy about blame expressions, assaulting the shepherds as “mere bellies, wretched shames.”³³ As we have seen, the rhetoric of ancient and modern lament resorts to exactly this, to spur the living to act or express the survivor’s aporia.

³¹ Caraveli-Chavez 1980 shows how call-outs structure lament.

³² On the varied mythic sources of song, see Nagy 1990.

³³ For bibliography and a new solution to the meaning of the first phrase, see Katz and Volk 2000.

A final conclusion for Homeric poetics, emerging from this experiment in socio-philology, is that because Helen represents lament, which in turn can be taken as the source of a community's truth-telling, its ranking of relations among dead and living, the place of Helen as the last person to utter a lament, at the very end of the *Iliad*, is entirely appropriate. She is the female Muse who counter-balances the Muse invoked at the poem's beginning. As another sort of goddess, she is the true inspiration for the Trojan War—and thus also for the stories told about it.

III.

In most comparisons of Greek and Irish literature known to me, the transitional trope usually involves invoking a distant common source, a genetic relation based on shared Indo-European origins.³⁴ This is by no means to devalue such work, which stands as a monument to the finest controlled philological comparatism. Rather, my Helleno-Hibernian *coda* is an attempt to make connections at a broader typological level, without the precise matching of lexical items that is crucial to the Indo-Europeanist's demonstrations, but with attention to cultural structures.³⁵ Two conclusions will flow from the comparison I propose: first, that ancient non-Homeric myths concerning the Greek Helen can be explicated by reference to Irish folklore on lamenters; and second, that the essential choral nature of lament in Greece can be used, by way of analogy, to clarify passages in medieval and modern Irish poetry.

The Greek myths have to do with Helen's infamous *eidolon* ("phantom" or "image"—the word gives us ultimately "idol"), which, according to a tradition attested in Stesichorus (sixth-century BCE lyric poet) and Euripides (fifth-century tragedian) was formed by the goddess Hera and sent to Troy as a substitute, while the real Helen innocently sat out the war in Egypt.³⁶ Whether or not Homer knew about this story and suppressed it is debatable. Yet the close connection between lament and Helen, which we can see in the Homeric representation of her, leads me to the following suggestion, taking

³⁴ McCone 1984 offers a good critique of the sometimes less productive ways of constructing such origins in the case of Irish materials.

³⁵ For this method, the work of J. Nagy 1990 on "talking heads" in Greek and Irish mythic traditions has been an inspiration.

³⁶ Sources are analyzed in T. Gantz 1993; for further bibliography and discussions see Suzuki 1989, 13–14.

account of the sorts of lore that surround the social poetry of lamenting in modern Greece and (earlier) modern Ireland. In Inner Mani, it is thought that a vision of a dying person comes to his or her kin at the time of death, something like a ghost but more vital and convincing than such an apparition. Thus, expert lamenters—the *miroloyistres*—have been known to set out for the funeral rituals before they even get word, through normal channels, that someone has died. They simply realize, from their interpretation of signs, that someone has expired and they are needed as professional mourners. The presence of these elderly professional mourners on the roads is taken as a bad omen and people try to avoid them.³⁷

In Modern Greek lore, the lamenter herself, although she may be avoided and seen as a harbinger of death, is *not* seen in a vision. That is the communicative mode of the deceased. But in Irish tradition, as is well known, she is—or, perhaps more often, is heard, as an unseen presence. Both medieval and modern Irish keeners do unusual things, as Angela Partridge’s analysis shows.³⁸ There are stories of the woman who hears about a death and then takes three leaps, upon which she arrives at the scene of the demise—not as good as bilocation, but close. Even more relevant is the tradition of the *bean sídhe*, “woman of the otherworld people.” Hearing or seeing her fearsome lamentation is thought to forebode death or disaster in a community.³⁹ If we assume that a traditional poetic role of Helen as a constant lamenter might have intersected with now lost Greek folk traditions that resembled the surviving Irish traditions, then the stories of her *eidolon* can be interpreted as emerging from a keener’s banshee-like apparitions.⁴⁰

Finally, the choral requirements of lament, which were used above to explicate odd moments in Helen’s biography, can help us reconsider Irish women’s performances in this genre. Although keening is a well-known and widely studied phenomenon in Irish culture and literature, it seems that its potential choral features have been neglected or misunderstood.⁴¹ The quite literary focus on the “authorship” or ownership of lament encourages

³⁷ Seremetakis 1991, 46–63.

³⁸ Partridge 1980. An example occurs in the *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire* discussed below (lines 53–55, Ó Tuama and Kinsella 1981).

³⁹ Lysaght 1986; Ó hÓgáin 1991, 45–46.

⁴⁰ A glimmering of such a folk tradition can be seen in the episode at *Odyssey* 4.795–841, where an *eidolon* of the sister of Penelope comes to tell her to stop grieving, that her son is alive. Since the scene occurs in a section of the poem which has artful innovations in narrative, it may be that the tradition of a ghostly *eidolon* coming to tell of a death has here, too, been stylized and varied.

⁴¹ Ó Buachalla 1998, with analysis and recent bibliography.

such readings. Thus, the most celebrated Irish lament, the *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire*, has to my knowledge always been taken as the solitary cry of a distraught wife, whose husband was shot dead by a sherriff's man in Macroom, Co. Cork on May 4, 1773.⁴² Attention should be drawn, however, to the odd “interruption” that occurs several times in the poem. The sister of Art breaks in, apparently scolding the wife, Eibhlín, while addressing the dead man:

(Art's sister): Mo chara is mo stór tú!
 Is mó bean chumtha chórach
 ó Chorcaigh na seolta
 go Droichead na Tóime
 do tabharfadh macha mór bó dhuit
 agus dorn buí-óir duit,
 na raghadh a chodladh 'na seomra
 oíche do thórraimh.

“My friend and my treasure!
 Many fine-made women
 from Cork of the sails
 to Droichead na Tóime
 would bring you great herds
 and a yellow-gold handful,
 and not sleep in their room
 on the night of your wake.”

To this the mourning wife reacts:

Mo chara is m'uan tú!
 is ná creid sin uathu,
 ná an cogar a fuarais,
 ná an scéal fir fuatha,
 gur a chodladh a chuas-sa.

“My friend and my lamb!
 Don't you believe them
 nor the scandal you heard
 nor the jealous man's gossip
 that it's sleeping I went.”

⁴² Text and translation from Ó Tuama and Kinsella 1981, 200–19. I have also consulted the commentary in Ó Tuama 1961.

She goes on to explain that she had only left the room to settle the young children to sleep. The rhetorical dynamic can be compared with that in the modern Greek examples cited. Blame here elicits a confirmation that the closest kin is, indeed, doing what she must: the antiphonal mode works to stage and underline the assertion of proper ritual.

If we can see traces of a dramatized, interlocutory style in Irish lament in the eighteenth century, what of earlier periods? The songs that have made their way into our surviving manuscripts do not seem to offer help. I think especially of such poems as the lament of Créide for Dínertach.⁴³ A distinctive element, something we do not have, strictly speaking, in ancient Greek examples, emerges in such compositions: the lament is combined with expressions of passionate love. Créide's quatrains can be taken either as a love poem or a lament. The combination is beautifully shaped metaphorically so that the arrows that slew her beloved are transformed into thoughts that keep her awake:

It é saigte gona súain
cech thrátha i n-aidchi adúair
serccoí, lia gnása, iar ndé
fir a tóeb thíre Roigne...

Lamenting love are the arrows that kill sleep
each hour of the freezing night,
from being with him, at end of day,
the man from beside Tír Roigne.

Just as Eibhlín O'Leary's lament is filled with terms of endearment, recollections of her husband's appearance and their conversation, so Créide's words elide the realms of death and eros—a combination to which we shall return in a moment. For now, it is enough to note that such a focus on the loving association of the speaker with the object of her lament militates against the use of a choral voice, for how could many women, even in a stylized version, explicitly affirm this more intimate bond?

Yet there are situations in which this can be imagined. Créide's lament includes one quatrain (7) that seems to allude to choral praise—whether in lament or for the live hero, is hard to tell: "In the land of glorious Aidne ... singing goes on [*canair*] about a glorious flame, from the south of Limerick of the graves, whose name is Dínertach." I note that, although Murphy translates the verb as "men sing," its impersonal-passive force leaves the gender

⁴³ Murphy 1998, #36.

of the subject unstated. I suggest that women might have been the singers, and if so we would have a parallel here for a strange passage from Irish saga.

Like the Greek, Irish tradition is immensely long and vigorous. Going back to the *Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó* (about 800 CE), we encounter a scene evocative of choral performances by women. The lines come at the end of the brawling story of the struggle between the men of Ulster and those of Connaught over the dog of Mac Dathó, which his owner has promised to both sides. In a shift ripe for structuralist myth analysis, the marvelous hound is temporarily trumped by a pig in a pot. The escalating contention for the Champion's Portion (*verbal, interior, spear-fighting, Leinster-centered, cooked*) breaks into a free-for-all chariot-chase across Ireland (*physical, exterior, chariot-fighting centrifugal, raw*).⁴⁴ The poor canine at the heart of the battle is carted around Ireland half-impaied on a war-chariot until he gradually disintegrates, thus naming a number of topographical features—"Dog-head," "Dog-tail," and so forth. Women frame the tale. At the opening, we hear Mac Dathó in a dialogue with his wife, who urges him to adopt the plan of giving the hound to both parties. The tale ends with a mysterious passage concerning a group of women and a bit of cinematic plot business worthy of John Ford at his best. Ailill's Connaught charioteer, named Fer Loga, manages to leap onto the hurtling chariot of Conchobar, the Ulster king, taking him by surprise in a chokehold. Asked what he will take to spare the king's life, Fer Loga replies: "Nothing great: bring me with you to Emain Macha and let the single women of the Ulstermen [*mná óentama*] and their maiden daughters of an age to bear young [*a n-ingena macdacht*] perform a choral song [*do gabáil chepóce*] around me every hour saying 'Fer Loga is my darling' [*Fer Loga mo lennán-sa*]."⁴⁵ And so it happened, the tale concludes, "since they [the women] did not dare do otherwise." At the end of a year, Fer Loga was let go back west at Athlone, taking a pair of Conchobar's horses with him. The Rawlinson manuscript version (probably fifteenth century) adds a strange retraction at this point, after saying that Fer Loga's wish was granted: "and he did not get the choral songs though he got the horses" (*ní*

⁴⁴ Recent treatments of the tale do not attempt such an overall reading, although McCone 1984 provides an interesting structural interpretation in terms of other hound-and-hero tales. On other facets of the story, see Buttimer 1982; B. K. Martin 1992; and Sayers 1982 and 1991.

⁴⁵ Text as in Thurneysen 1935, 19, lines 9–13, from the *Book of Leinster* version (circa 1160 CE). The somewhat expanded version in Rawlinson B.512 omits the adjective *óentama* but adds a mark after the initial song-verse to indicate "and so forth"—as if other verses had once been known to the scribe or his audience: see Meyer 1894, 56 and 64.

ruc na cepóca cé ruc na heocha).⁴⁶ Both Classicists and Celticists realize these days that such manuscript variants are usually loaded: no reading is without its politics. In this case, the stakes are quite clear. A version of the *Tale of Mac Dathó's Pig* asserting that the good women of Ulster spent a year in daily singing of a choral love-song addressed to a Connaught hostage-taker is unlikely to be generated by Ulster tale-tellers. The counter-assertion (he never got the songs) surely represents the remnant of an *Ulster* version struggling to defuse this insulting narrative.

But is there even more at stake? What harm after all is a one-time accession to the musical whim of a terroristic Connaughtman, even an act so clearly charged with erotic overtones (which we might view as a verbal substitute for the conquest and rape of his enemies' women)? The mythistorical threat, I submit, must lie in the assertion, through this minor saga detail, that Fer Loga thereby established in enemy territory a *continuing institution* to embarrass and taunt the Ulstermen, a recurrent song event that Ulster would rather deny. Furthermore, we should view that institution—even in a medieval, Christianized text—as alluding to something closely akin to ancient Greek hero-cult.

To start at the lexical level: the uncommon word *cepóc* has been glossed as “panegyric sung in chorus (‘possibly of an erotic character’).”⁴⁷ But the lexicologists go on to note that the word is used frequently “of the eulogy of the dead.” And as O’Curry’s collection of material illustrates (although he does not make a point of this), the subjects of this choral performance are not just anyone.⁴⁸ A gloss on a fragment of an elegy for Colum Cille defines *cepóc* as a Scottish synonym for Irish *aidbsi*—the term used for the great choral song in the saint’s honor, performed by the assembled poets of all Ireland in 590. In addition, the glossator cites a poetic tag showing that *cepóc* was used for praise of a king. Finally, the poem made on behalf of his peers by the chief-poet Amergin on the death of his fellow-poet and teacher Aithirne at the hands of the Ulstermen, contains the quatrain:⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Meyer 1894, 56.

⁴⁷ RIA Dictionary s.v., citing Chadwick *Scottish Gaelic Studies* (6) 190. It is clear that the definition has been devised to fit our passage, the first cited after the lemma. The dictionary interestingly adds, from O’Mulconry’s glossary, an etymology for *cepóc* (alleged to be “Greek,” *graece*): *cae + bo* “i. *laus*.” Apparently the author of this gloss took *cepóc* as a compound of which the first element was *coí* “lamenting” (cf. *serc-coí* in the lament of Créide, above).

⁴⁸ O’Curry 1873, 371–74.

⁴⁹ O’Curry 1873, 374 translating *Book of Ballymote* fol.142a. Cf. Stokes 1903:284–85, who translates the word in this passage as “death-chant,” as he does earlier (282) when it is applied to lament

“I will make a *cepóc* here
 and I will make his lamentation
 and here I will set up his tombstone
 and here I will make his graceful grave.”

While O’Curry sees the song for Fer Loga and for Colum Cille as expressions of joy, he acknowledges that the other two early attestations center on grief. Comparing the performance to the wide-ranging crooning called *cronán*, he speculates that “the Irish funeral cry, as it is called, of our times, is a remnant (though perhaps only a degenerate uncultivated remnant) of the ancient *Aidbsi* or *Cepóc* of the Gaedhil,” and ends with a personal note: in his own day, men and women sang choral laments at funerals in parts of the south of Ireland.⁵⁰

The funeral context of *cepóc* might seem to be contradicted in some cases by the fact that the addressee is alive. Yet we need to allow for stylization. The poetic praise of Colum Cille in 590 may just as easily be a retrojection, a “live” version, of what we know became an elegiac post-mortem performance by 597, the *Amra Cholum Chille*. Similarly, I suggest, the song “Fer Loga is my darling” might be a stylized “live” version of what had become a choral song in Ulster or elsewhere, a lament for a long-dead warrior whose story might gain annual, renewed relevance in the context of a (pagan or Christian) women’s ritual. In effect, Fer Loga lives again each time the performance is renewed. To represent the song as one dedicated to a notorious *living* man is to acknowledge this institutional continuity. As we have seen above, the erotic coloration is not foreign to lament (cf. the notion underlying *serc-coi*). The obvious Frazerian analogue would be to the cult of Adonis, which we know was represented poetically by Sappho in the sixth century BCE and practiced in Athens through the fifth.⁵¹ But an even closer comparandum brings us to notice the specific groups selected to sing the song: single (unmarried or widowed?) Ulsterwomen and the (or their) maiden daughters of marriageable age. Compare the explanation for the women’s rites for Hippolytus, which the radical antiquarian Euripides enshrines at the end of the tragedy named for this hero. Hippolytus, the object of his stepmother’s love, spurned her, only to be falsely denounced as a seducer in her suicide note. Cursed by his father,

over Luaine’s death caused by Athirne’s satire. It is worth noting that this tale features a male dialogic lament over the maiden Luaine, by Conchobar and Celtchair.

⁵⁰ O’Curry 1873, 374.

⁵¹ Women lament the hero and grow quickly dying grasses as part of the ritual complex; see Detienne 1994 and more recently Reitzammer 2016.

he races away in a chariot, which is then caused to crash. Artemis, *dea ex machina*, promises compensation for the hero's tragic death, as she addresses him in his last moments of life (1423–30):⁵²

σοὶ δ', ὦ ταλαίπωρ', ἀντὶ τῶνδε τῶν κακῶν	
τιμὰς μεγίστας ἐν πόλει Τροζηνίαι	
δώσω κόραι γὰρ ἄζυγες γάμων πάρος	1425
κόμας κεροῦνταί σοι, δι' αἰῶνος μακροῦ	
πένθη μέγιστα δακρύων καρπουμένῳ	
ἀεὶ δὲ μουσοποιὸς ἐς σὲ παρθένων	
ἔσται μέριμνα, κοῦν ἀνώνυμος πεσὼν	
ἔρως ὁ Φαίδρας ἐς σὲ σιγηθήσεται.	1430

To you, long-suffering man, I shall give
in return for these evils the greatest honors in Troizen.
Girls, unyoked before their marriages, will cut
their hair for you, through long ages, as you harvest
from their tears the greatest griefs. On you forever
there will be the song-making thought of maidens,
and Phaedra's passion will not fall nameless and be hushed.

Hippolytus will, in one sense, never die. His commemoration is, significantly, both erotic (it will concern Phaedra's love for him) and elegiac in tone. We might wonder whether the maidens re-enact in some way their mythic counterpart, the woman who “died “ for love as they move (ritually) into the next world—that of their marriages.⁵³ Their choral song about love is civic and bears a social message: the necessity for passion, the requirement for women their age to enter the sphere of Aphrodite. That the Ulster women who are to hymn Fer Loga are specifically “single” and ready for marriage appears to put their performance into the same initiatory category. This is not to say that some “archaic” ritual is just vaguely recalled, for certainly the scene in the *Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó* functions synchronically on its own as a fit ending to the tale. Yet in both—ritual origin and rhetorical stylization—at the same time as it revivifies memory, performance encodes power, whether that be the force of Aphrodite, emblemized by her young victim, or the aggression of Connaught, planting its hero through maiden songs across the border.

⁵² This view of archaic Greek hero-cult and its complex poetic stylizations is deeply indebted to Nagy 1999b.

⁵³ On the homology between women's marriage and death, see Rehm 1994. It is well known that change of status in initiation rites is stylized as a death: see Burkert 1985, 260–64.

TELEMACHUS AND THE LAST HERO SONG¹

In the *Odyssey*, it is evident that Telemachus, the exemplary son, will never equal his cruel, restless father. Nor will the astronauts, for all their lonely voyaging, stir us as deeply as Dillinger.

—Paul Zweig, *The Adventurer*²

If epics are products of an elegiac urge for touching heroic ages past, the *Odyssey*, that greatest nostalgic poem, cannot but be already a metatext.³ The protagonist's desire to return to his past, to all that Ithaca and Penelope represent, is counterpointed throughout the poem by a second desire, on the part of Telemachus and other audiences, to hear the past, a desire enacted, challenged, and, once in a while, satisfied, in scenes of elaborate design, from Phemius' song of the Achaean *nostoi* (*Odyssey* 1.325–59) to the stories of Nestor, Menelaus, and Helen in Books 3 and 4, reaching a climax in Odysseus' narrative in Book 11 about his encounters among the dead and an anticlimax in his hurried rehash of his adventures for Penelope (*Odyssey* 23.306–43).⁴ By extension, this desire is ours as hearers of the *Odyssey*. To some degree, this latter desire can be identified with an audience's needs and expectations: a poem performed without divagations would be abrupt and inartistic, completely contrary to the expansive style at which both Homer

¹ Originally published in *Colby Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (1993): 222–40.

² Zweig 1974, 46.

³ This self-reflexivity of the poem enables it to blend easily with early Greek philosophical thought: see Lachterman 1990.

⁴ For outstanding treatments of the depiction of such narratives and audiences, especially in Book 11, see the two recent articles by Doherty (1991 and 1992). Wyatt 1989 sees in the expansions here a reflection of actual audience-poet interactions.

and the performers within his compositions are masters.⁵ A poem about Odysseus *polutropos* is even more so in its essence diverse. Part of the fascination of the *Odyssey* comes from the tension between narratives performed within the poem and the course of the external plot; sometimes they conflict openly, as when Odysseus' *apologoi* on Scheria delay his homecoming. Of course, only a perverse sort of nostalgia for a "primitive narrative" stripped of digressions would want to do away with the *apologoi* of Books 9–12.⁶ A more subtle attack, however, on the texture and structure of the *Odyssey* is still carried out in some quarters these days, prompted apparently by the quest for the "primitive," and it is this which the present paper attempts to counter, by taking seriously the metapoetic meanings of one figure in the poem, Telemachus.

The first four books of the *Odyssey*, the so-called "Telemacheia," provide the clearest example of the remarkably fractured contemporary critical reading of Homeric poetry. On one side, classicists such as Reucher and van Thiel continue to produce readings in which these introductory episodes are treated as additional, extraneous, marked by a second hand, that of a postulated "T-poet" who had different goals than the "O-poet," the master credited with what they call the main body of the poem, the story of Odysseus.⁷ On the other side, scholars like Pucci, Peradotto, Katz, and Murnaghan approach the *Odyssey* as a unity, and work from an informed literary-critical perspective, but focus their attention on smaller problems of character or theme and so avoid two issues: why the poem is shaped, overall, in the way it is, and how the poem relates to the world of oral composition-in-performance.⁸ In other words, these modern "Unitarians" (to use the terms of an older Homeric debate), while managing to escape the pitfalls of "Analyst" dissection of Homer, in embracing attractive deconstructive reading and modernist thematics have nevertheless neglected or misunderstood the most important body of critical work on Homer in this century,

⁵ I deal with this shared style at length in Martin 1989.

⁶ This perversity in *Odyssey* studies is brilliantly analyzed by Todorov 1977, 53–65.

⁷ Reucher 1989, on which see my review Martin 1992b; van Thiel 1988 uses less personalized notions of *Früh-* and *Spätodysseen*. For the history of the Analytic treatment of the Telemachy, see Heubeck 1974, 87–113. Patzer 1991 offers a concise critique of Analyst procedure regarding the Telemachy. S. West in Heubeck et al. 1988, 1:53–54 appreciates the importance of the Telemachy for the poem as a whole, but still is tempted to think this section originated as an independent narrative.

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, the citation of the authors' names in this paper will refer to the following books: Peradotto 1990; Pucci 1987; Katz 1991; Murnaghan 1987.

the context-based approach of those who discovered in Homeric poetry the product of a living, oral folk art.

A study of the *Odyssey* starting from the figure of Telemachus might wed the insights of both sides in the critical schism by moving discussion to a different level, that of folk epic performance and the social situations it entails. But beginning with a figure, rather than a theme, involves the critic in one difficulty right away: there is probably no more contested area in literary study than characterization. Recent trends in explicating literature, and especially narrative, have not managed to do justice to this crucial part of the tale-teller's art. Theory has not been able to help the readers of Homer go beyond our instant and strong impression that character construction in the Homeric poems is brilliant, subtle, and cunning. What is more, all too often sophisticated analysis of narrative actually has impeded any appreciation of characterization, whether in epic poetry or elsewhere. As Robert Alter, the comparatist and critic of Hebrew literature, wrote recently, "the narratologists have scarcely any critical vocabulary for encompassing the mimetic dimension of character."⁹

We can trace this state of affairs fairly well. The Russian formalists of the 1920s and 1930s, with their total emphasis on plot as the determinant of character, tended to reduce characterization to a question of function: the model underlying their work is most explicit in Vladimir Propp's well-known *Morphology of the Folktale*, published in 1928, in which he illustrates how a small set of functions and agents from magic helpers to villains can generate a large corpus of Russian wonder tales.¹⁰ Later structuralists of the 1960s and 1970s, including Barthes, Greimas, and Todorov, built onto Formalist narratology.¹¹ While Todorov acknowledges that there are novels constructed around character (those of Henry James, for example) as well as around plot, he devotes more interest to the techniques and theory behind the latter category.¹² More recently, social and political commitments have turned the focus of contemporary literary theory to popular, noncanonical, and often anonymous works, in other words, precisely those fictions that privilege structuralist interpretation. Subtle characterization is not what audiences most value in television soap opera or popular fiction; of more interest is the genre's virtuosic manipulation of pure plot elements.

⁹ Alter 1989, 51.

¹⁰ Propp 1958. On his place in Formalist theory, see Birch 1989, 124–25 and Steiner 1984, 80–95.

¹¹ The lines of development are sketched by Culler 1975, 230–38.

¹² Todorov 1977, 66–79.

Finally, nonliterary “character,” the notion that we can identify a subsisting, consistent set of behaviors all deriving from some inner force, sounds too transcendental for our grittier *fin de siècle*.

It is significant for Homeric studies that a state-of-the-art book like Marilyn Katz’s *Penelope’s Renown* problematizes the very notion of character, reading into the figure of Penelope the radical indeterminacy of the poem’s plot possibilities.¹³ For this strategy, although deconstructive in nature rather than structuralist, still privileges event over person, plot over character, by viewing the latter as a reflex of the former.¹⁴ It represents a valuable mode of investigation but leaves us, partly by its very sophistication regarding the ontological, with the more practical critical problem of how figures in the *Odyssey* are represented in this sort of poetry to begin with: how we perceive “character” and, more to the point, how an audience for a performance, rather than readers of text, accumulate knowledge of the actors within the dramatic narrative. These questions require one to grapple with oral poetics, the possibilities of which are still largely undeveloped among classicists.

A decade ago Jasper Griffin found it necessary to start from scratch when he tried to talk about characterization in the epics: “I hope that it will prove possible,” he wrote, “to establish some general points about the existence in the poems of characterization, and to see how it is used, rather differently in the two epics, towards the same goals.”¹⁵ Griffin must resort to such tentative phrasing because he has read the history of criticism on Homeric characters, from Wilamowitz to Kirk, a history marked by two trends: the perfection of Analyst techniques in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the development of oral-formulaic techniques for reading Homer in the mid-twentieth century. For the Analysts, including Wilamowitz, there could never be consistent characterization in the epics because the poems themselves were patched together by rhapsodes, interpolators, Redaktors, and Bearbeiter, who willfully transferred words appropriate to one scene—or worse, one character—to another. The work of one of

¹³ Katz 3–19 is most explicit about this procedure, which, as she acknowledges, is also prominent in the *Odyssey* books by Pucci and Peradotto. Cf. Peradotto 153–54 who elaborates on the viewpoints of Barthes and Bremond regarding the instability of the notion of “character.”

¹⁴ Cf. Peradotto 122–23 who rightly criticizes “standards of verisimilitude derived from the nineteenth-century novel,” but explains apparent inconsistencies in Odysseus’ character as deriving from “functional goals to be achieved in the ensuing narrative” (122 n. 1), thus seeming to introduce an equally rigid and time-bound standard of plot efficiency.

¹⁵ Griffin 1980, 50. In his chapter on characterization he sets himself the modest goals of showing that Homeric characters can differ from one another, have implicit intentions, and be complex (cf. p. 52).

the last of the old-time Analysts, Denys Page, overlaps the second trend, the oral-formulaic. Page, in his *Homeric Odyssey*, can at least explain the alleged mistakes on which earlier Analysts had fastened. The “muddled” instructions of Athena to Telemachus, in Book 1, Page attributes to an oral performer, either a creative poet or an oral reciter, who allegedly mixed things up, transferring to Athena language that belongs properly to the suitors. In Page’s solution the poet here becomes the careless botcher, a position formerly reserved for the Analysts’ obtuse editors.¹⁶

The second trend that affected studies of Homeric character should not be attributed solely, or even mainly, to Milman Parry, although his work doubtless provided the impetus. In his groundbreaking thesis on the traditional epithet, Milman Parry defined the formula as “an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea.”¹⁷ This way of looking at the formula was coupled, in Parry’s analysis, with the well-known demonstration of the economy and extension of the formulaic systems: the notion that there existed one, but generally only one, formulaic phrase for each grammatical case of a given name and epithet. He concluded that such systematicity meant no one descriptive adjective was invented for the individual passages in which we might find it in the poems of Homer. Epithets were a reflex of the necessity for creating compositions in performance.¹⁸ Parry’s thesis, it can be seen in retrospect, traces the same theoretical path, on the level of diction, that the Russian Formalists trod in dealing with character. Like them, Parry was not necessarily against the view that any one element in a composition had deeper meaning. He was merely concerned to show that there was a functional basis for the appearance of epithets. Parry himself did not extend his theory as far as the problem of characterization in Homer. He did, however, recognize so-called “isometric” formulas. For example, Odysseus is described twice as *polutropos*, “having many turnings.” This happens in the first line of the poem and again at 10.330. But Parry notes there existed another epithet, equivalent in meter, namely *diiphilos*, “dear to Zeus,” which the poet could have used for Odysseus at the two places where he chose *polutropos* instead. Thus, Parry leaves open the possibility that Homer can employ “particularized” epithets.¹⁹ We would expect that these particularized epithets, few as they might be, would form the basis

¹⁶ Page 1955b, 52–64.

¹⁷ Parry 1971, 1–190, hereafter *MHV*; quote on p. 13.

¹⁸ A review of the thesis and subsequent alterations can be found in Martin 1989, 149–52.

¹⁹ *MHV* 153–58.

of an examination of Odysseus' character. Parry does not undertake such an exercise. Yet he is not against it: the proper sphere for investigating character in this type of poetry simply seemed to lie outside the system he had discovered. He claims that "we learn the characters of men and women in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* not from epithets but from what they do and from what they say."²⁰

Unfortunately, Parry's quite elegant theory, with its tremendous value for arguing that Homeric poetry was meant originally for oral performance, led in the next generation after Parry to a severely reductionist reading of Homeric poetry.²¹ Again, Denys Page was one of the more authoritative and articulate proponents of what we might call the determinist view of poetic composition. Page in his 1959 book on the *Iliad* wrote that Homer used ready-made phrases "extending in length from a word or two to several complete lines, already adapted to the metre and either already adapted or instantly adaptable to the limited range of ideas which the subject matter of the Greek Epic may require him to express."²² It does not take much reflection to realize that such a squint-eyed view of Homer blocks out any possibility that the poet can create rich, resonant characters, indeed, can create anything aesthetically satisfying at all. In this view, either there are unlimited formulas—many of which we cannot even identify as such, on the basis of the texts we have—or Homer is bound by his art to sketch two-dimensional figures instead of rounded characters.

Since the late 1950s, Homerists, when they have chosen to focus on character at all, have generally done so by skirting the issue of formulaic composition. Oral theory created an embarrassing dilemma. One knew at first reading that Homeric poetry contained three-dimensional, deeply felt characters. At the same time, the poet's formulaic technique—at least as far as it had been described—should not have resulted in anything at all like good characterization. The more literary Homerists tended to finesse the problem: Cedric Whitman, for instance, wanted very much to believe both Parry's thesis and his own acute sensibility. In a chapter of his 1958 book entitled "Homeric Character and the Tradition," Whitman starts with the observation that "Homeric epic differs radically ... even from the most sophisticated

²⁰ *MHV* 152.

²¹ For overviews of this process, see J. M. Foley 1985; Lord 1986; and the annotated bibliography by M. Edwards 1986.

²² Page 1959, 222.

evolvments of oral poetry found anywhere.”²³ When he notices slightly changed repetition of motifs, or embellishments, in arming scenes or *aristeiai*, Whitman is careful to suggest that such characterizing touches are the mark of a brilliant creative poet moving *beyond* the formulaic tradition. Homer, in this view, turned out to be an exception, the kind of poet one could just barely imagine within an oral tradition: “With singleness of vision and real mastery of the rudiments, a poet might so dispose and deploy his material that the generalized motifs, crystallized phrases, and traditional imagery fall into contextual groupings of great specific significance.”²⁴ Thus, Whitman accounted for both greatness and technique by saying, in effect, that Homer outgrew his own art. Jasper Griffin, in *Homer on Life and Death*, also manages to provide some examples from the *Iliad* of characterization by means of slight change in a type-scene or by verbal repetitions.²⁵ But he, too, refuses to place the fact of characterization within the Parry model of oral-formulaic composition. In fact, he prefaces the book by saying that he has serious doubts about the utility of much oral-formulaic analysis for interpretation of the poems. We are left with a finely written belle-lettristic appreciation and Griffin’s commitment to taste and sense as the standard for judging our literary impressions.²⁶ If all this is a helpful corrective to the abuses of a mechanistic approach to literature, it still provides no usable understanding of technique, or any explication that would aim for a much needed “unified field” theory of Homeric poetics.

The *Odyssey* itself begins with an extended focus on Telemachus; this by itself justifies an investigation of his character, which, in turn, requires one to face the practical poetic problem of character construction. Only in this way can we understand the hero’s son from the inside out, as it were, on the level of the poet’s own technique. In what follows I shall outline several ways of employing the tools of oral-formulaic analysis in the study of characterization. Clearly, there is material enough for a book-length study. But the brief examination of Telemachus’ characterization in Book One will suffice to show that we can consider Homer a master poet without abandoning our belief that he works within a traditional performance medium. Furthermore, it will lead us to reconsider the shape and intent of the entire *Odyssey*.

²³ Whitman 1958, 154.

²⁴ Whitman 1958, 180.

²⁵ Griffin 1980, 53–56.

²⁶ Griffin 1980, xiii–xiv.

First, a word about method. The more we learn about actual oral poetries, from Central Asian to Arabic and African to South American Indian, the more obvious it becomes that the traditional audience of an oral performance, the “native speakers,” as it were, of the poetry, have, all of them, the mental equivalent of a CD-ROM player full of phrases and scenes. Reading Homer with the aid of a computerized lexical searching program enables one finally to replicate the average experience of the audience Homer had in mind. Modern hearers of a traditional epic in cultures where the song making survives are observed to comment appreciatively on the smallest verbal changes, not in the ways a three-year-old demands the exact words of a bedtime text, but with a full knowledge of the dozens of ways the teller could have spun out a line at a given point in the narrative. In a living oral tradition, people are exposed to verbal art constantly, not just on specific entertainment occasions, which can happen every night in certain seasons. When they work, eat, drink, and do other social small-group activities, myth, song, and saying are always woven into their talk. Consequently, it is not inaccurate to describe them as bilingual, fluent in their natural language but also in the *Kunstsprache* of their local verbal art forms.²⁷ In other words, when we compare every use of every word in Homer with every other use, we are doing what the listener to an oral poem in a strong native tradition does naturally. I would go further and say that the full “meaning,” and the full enjoyment, of traditional poetry come only when one has heard it all before a hundred times, in a hundred different versions. Unfortunately, we are left with only one version of the *Odyssey*, but this still means: to read Homer is to have read Homer.²⁸ In reading the *Odyssey*, we must first identify a range of “meaning” for both phrases and type-scenes, then use the dictionary of this poetics to interpret the individual items as they occur chronologically in the narrative of the poem. The method may seem counter-intuitive when an argument for the meaning of a scene in Book 1 is based on a repetition of a few phrases in, say, Books 20 and 24. But in fact this is precisely the point where oral poetics must differ from standard literary criticism. The reader of a modern novel, for instance Joseph Conrad’s *Nostromo*, only gradually learns, page by page, in temporal order, just how ironic are certain epithets applied to the stevedore or the English mine owner. That is because each

²⁷ A wealth of examples may be found in the following sample of excellent studies: Blackburn et al. 1989; Lutgendorf 1991; Mills 1990; Chadwick and Zhirmunsky 1969; Basso 1985; Moyle 1990.

²⁸ This is one of the ways in which an “oral poetics”—dismissed by Griffin 1980—differs significantly from methods applied to purely written texts. On the differences for our interpretive strategies, see Russo 1987.

novel creates its own language within a genre that makes a demand, even by its title, for something completely new. It is true that Telemachus, in Book One of the *Odyssey*, tells off his mother by pointing out that listeners always are delighted by the newest song—in this case the return of the Greeks from Troy (*Odyssey* 1.351–52). But his remark is ironic in several ways, as I shall show later. Homeric epic does not work like a novel; the “character” of any given person is not constructed anew in each performance, but neither is it a set value known to all in the audience. Thanks to its traditionality and flexibility—the two aspects seen by Parry in the formulaic system—Homeric epic can accomplish characterizing effects that prose fiction cannot bring about.

The characterization of Telemachus occurs in at least four different modes in Book One, all of which function specifically by means of formulaic style and oral performance. Briefly, they are: first, the epithets with which the poet describes him; second, the way the poet frames Telemachus’ speeches using formulaic language; third, Telemachus’ stylized rhetorical strategies within the nine speeches the poet allots him in the book; and fourth, the way in which the poet focalizes the *Odyssey* narrative through Telemachus.

The first mode, the epithet system, brings us back of course to the nub of the problem of characterization within oral-formulaic poetry. Since Milman Parry’s demonstration that the epithet is economically useful, a few literary critics have interpreted his conclusions to mean that epithets are semantically empty. Some Homerists have felt compelled to defend the appropriateness to context, and the resonance, of such famous epithets as grain-bearing earth (*phusizoos aia*), used by Homer at *Iliad* 3.243 to describe the earth that covers Helen’s brothers, the Dioscuri, whom she pathetically thinks are still alive.²⁹ This is not really a counter-argument to Parry’s position. In such cases, there is nothing to prevent our saying that the epithet is *both* metrically functional *and* poetically beautiful. No one, to my knowledge, has yet tried to argue that every time each epithet for a hero is used in Homer it is somehow just as apt, in its immediate context, as *phusizoos aia* in *Iliad* 3. And yet there is evidence that the consistent use of certain epithets for certain heroes and not others is meaningful within the formulaic system. William Whallon in 1969, Norman Austin in 1975, and most recently Richard Sacks in his 1987 study of epithets for Hector show this.³⁰ Sacks can demonstrate that Hector’s epithets *phaidimos* “shining” and *androphonos* “man-killing” are indeed deeply significant in terms of the theme of the *Iliad*, but not

²⁹ This is one of the prime examples among many used to this point by Vivante 1982.

³⁰ Whallon 1969; Austin 1975, 11–80; Sacks 1987.

necessarily significant at a narrative level in terms of the immediate scene in which they occur. With Telemachus in Book One we can go a step further. Not only is the use of epithets with his name significant on a deeper thematic level: the poet's use of epithet is also sensitive to the context of a particular scene.

Consider the first time we see Telemachus, at *Odyssey* 1.114. Athena in the guise of Mentès has just arrived at the palace in Ithaca. Telemachus sees her first. The line runs:

τὴν δὲ πολὺ πρῶτος ἶδε Τηλέμαχος θεοειδής·

Telemachus, in appearance like a god, saw her first.

A lexical search reveals that the *polu prôtos* phrase “by far the first” is itself a formula used a half-dozen times in the *Iliad* in scenes where one warrior either volunteers first for a test of skill or wounds his enemy first (*Iliad* 7.162, 8.256, 14.442, 23.288, etc.). Within the *Odyssey*, lines beginning *ton / tèn de polu prôt-* occur two other times, both in Book 17, which we will turn to examine later. But let us pause over the epithet for a while. *Theoeidês*, “in appearance like a god,” at first glance occurs here because the predicate phrase, from *tên* to *ide* in the line, leaves a certain metrical slot for the subject phrase. It happens that of the four noun-epithet formulas attested for Telemachus in the nominative case, only this one will fit this metrical slot: it is an economic system, in other words.³¹ The main weakness of this sort of explanation has been exposed by Austin, who pointed out that most of the time the name Telemachus, when we consider all grammatical cases, does not even have an epithet: the poet could have made a line here without an epithet at all.³² More recently David Shive has gone a step further to show exactly what sorts of other lines Homer could have made up without using certain epithets when he did.³³ Such arguments chivalrously defend the freedom of the poet (although it does not follow that we must agree with Shive's contention that Homer, thus liberated, therefore has to be a *literate* composer). But what is the payoff for our reading of an individual scene such as this?

Once we admit that the epithet use is not merely mechanistic, three possibilities for interpretation arise:

³¹ The other epithets for this case are *hierê is*; *pepnumenos*; and *hêros*: see lists in Austin 1975, 55.

³² Austin 1975, 58–61.

³³ Shive 1987. For reaction from an oralist perspective, see Nagy 1988.

1. That Homer even used an epithet for Telemachus here, when we first see him, signals that the scene immediately following is important for our understanding of Telemachus' character. In this regard, the epithet is like a single musical note sounded at the start of a composition.
2. The epithet *theoeidês*, "like a god in appearance," has a deeper significance in terms of its connection with an essential theme of the *Odyssey*, namely the obscure dividing line between humans and mortals.³⁴
3. The epithet is significant *in contrast* to any of the other three epithets for Telemachus that Homer might have used had he shaped the line a bit differently. In other words, the epithet has as great a role, or greater, in determining the line's shape as does the verbal phrase. *Theoeidês* is used because it best fits the narrative moment at *Odyssey* 1.114.

An explanation of these three points will show that they are not mutually exclusive. All the effects mentioned can operate at once. We might get a better angle of vision on the first phenomenon by first looking at archaic poetry in a related poetic tradition, that of Old Irish. A number of praise poems survive in Old Irish, written to commemorate local warrior kings by their tribal poets in the sixth century CE and later.³⁵ One of these archaic alliterative poems purports to praise a mythical king, Móen:

1. Móin óin, ó ba nóid, ní bu nós ardríg,
oirt ríga, rout án, aue Luirc Labraid.
4. Gríf indrid íath n-anéoil aue Luirc Lóiguirí
arddu dóinib acht nóibrí níme.
5. ór ós gréin gelmair gabais for dóine
sceo déib, día óin as Móin macc Aini óinríg.

Móen the only one, since he was a child—
not as a high king—slew kings, a splendid throw,
Labraid grandson of Lorc.

A griffin who overran unknown countries was the grandson
of Lóegaire Lorc,
higher than all men except the holy king of heaven.

Gold brighter than the sun, he became lord of men and gods,
the one god is Móen son of Ane the only king.³⁶

³⁴ On this Homeric theme, see especially Nagy 1999, 151–73 and J. S. Clay 1983, 159–83.

³⁵ On this poetry, see Williams and Ford 1992, 40–44.

³⁶ Translation in Dillon 1969, 18. Text from Meyer 1913, 10–11. Prof. Donnchadh Ó Corráin points out to me that the phraseology of the poem indicates that it is probably an archaizing composition

It is clear that the basic pattern of such praise poetry is to make predication about the subject. This is done in old Indo-European syntactical style by nominal sentences in which the copula “be” is not expressed, as in the third line printed here, which reads literally “A griffin who overran countries unknown—the grandson of Lóegaire Lorc.”³⁷ Other such praise poems have even less narrative. They resemble strings of predicates. Consider this one on a trio of heroes called the three Fothads. The proper names come first in each clause in the first couplet, last in the second:

*Find a poet; Russ red-haired;
Fergus fiery; lord of the sea.
A princely champion Nuadu Necht;
a bright poet phrase are the three Fothads.*³⁸

One could argue from verse like this and from Sanskrit parallels that such praise poetry is, in fact, the ultimate ancestor of epic diction. Gregory Nagy has demonstrated a related point most fully in his book *Pindar’s Homer*, which shows how the very basis of Homeric verse, the unique hexameter meter, could have arisen from shorter meters as found in lyric poetry of archaic Indo-European languages.³⁹ If we extend the argument now to the structure of the formula as well as the meter in Homer, we can say that such phrases as *Têlemakhos theoeidês* could have started as complete sentences forming a full eight-syllable verse in an archaic praise poem. The phrase, as a nominal sentence, would mean “Telemachos is in appearance like a god.” Similar sentences really do survive in Greek poetry, specifically in a praise context: for instance in Pindar’s *Pythian* 10, which begins Ὀλβία Λακεδαίμων, μάκαιρα Θεσσαλία, two nominal sentences meaning “happy is Lakedaemon, blest is Thessaly.” This is to say, then, that Homeric epic fills out the story implicit in each noun-epithet formula. Epic treats these units as noun phrases, rather than complete sentences, and epic provides each with another verb, as here, so that the adjective becomes attributive rather than predicative: “Telemachus, in appearance like a god, first by far saw him.” What must be stressed is that the very use of a name with an epithet

by a Christian poet. The stylistic point still stands, however.

³⁷ On this syntactic style, see Benveniste 1966b.

³⁸ Meyer 1913, 14.

³⁹ Nagy 1990, esp. 439–64. The argument is made at greater length, with Sanskrit dictional comparanda, in Nagy 1974.

in Homer conserves the poetic function of the old nominal sentence, if not the syntactic function. Such phrases occur in the narrative at key moments. Notice that this is contrary to the view, often put forward by some readers of Parry, that epithets occur as padding, somehow filling out the line at the unimportant moment when the harried oral poet just wants to get through his sentence and on to the next one and does not pause to think up a novel adjective but simply throws in one that he knows will fit. Turning that view on its head, we see that here the key moment is the introduction of a character we have not encountered before in this performance. *Theoeidês* then functions like the applause from the audience when a well-known actor walks on stage, even if it is in a new role on opening night. Homer and his long praise poetry tradition is making a statement about Telemachus.

What is the statement? Here we can turn to my second observation. The content of the epithet does not necessarily relate to the content of the immediate context. But it does tie in to a very important underlying theme of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, namely the distinction between gods and mortals. The *Iliad* offers us scenarios in which heroes overstep the limit, fighting even against the gods. And the *Iliad*, as well, in the character of Paris, also called Alexandros, examines the gap between appearance and reality, opening up the possibility that one can have an astoundingly good appearance and still be a coward. Hector berates his brother Paris in Book 3 (*Iliad* 3.39–45):

Evil-Paris [*Duspari*], best in appearance, mad for women, beguiler:
 you should have stayed unborn and died unmarried.
 I'd prefer that; it would be a lot better
 than to be a mockery like this and despicable [*hupopsion*].
 No doubt the long-haired Achaeans are cackling,
 saying you're the most conspicuous fighter because you've got a good
 appearance, but there's no force in your guts and not a bit of strength.

Hector uses the noun *eidos*, “appearance,” three times in this one speech, all to the effect that it is not any guarantee of martial craft. In fact throughout the *Iliad*, mentioning another's *eidos* can be a way of implying that the warrior in question has not got the mettle to survive. In this scene of Book 3, it is thus ironic that the poet Homer, within narrative, consistently denotes Paris with the phrase *Alexandros theoeidês*, as in the line just before the speech I have translated (*Iliad* 3.37). The *Odyssey*, too, dwells on the theme of appearance versus real ability in several places. In a way, the entire action of the poem is predicated on the ability to disguise one's *eidos*,

as Odysseus is so successful at doing.⁴⁰ Ironically, it is Odysseus in disguise who sermonizes on “appearances” after being mocked during the games of the Phaeacians (*Odyssey* 8.167–77). After instructing Euryalus about the diversity of the gods’ gifts, he notes (apparently in self-reference):

One man is of less account in appearance [*eidos*]
but the god puts a crowning shape on his words,
and the people look on him and take delight.

In the dramatic situation of this passage, having a good *eidos* implies that one is neither a good speaker nor, in fact, very bright. It is significant that the young man Euryalus, who has athletic ability but no rhetorical graces, is the object of Odysseus’ admonishing words.⁴¹ In the course of the Phaeacian episode, we see the young man learn. By the end of Book 8 he has the wit and poise to offer Odysseus a sword and an apology. This process of education is precisely what happens to Telemachus in the course of the *Odyssey* as a whole, as many critics have remarked.⁴² My point is that the use of the formula *theoeidês* marks out Homer’s handling of this traditional theme, which we can call “the hero grows up.” When an audience keyed into the traditional formulaic system first hears Telemachus described as “having the appearance of a god,” it receives a package of thematic messages, as it were, a box of potential narrative directions. This character, the son of Odysseus, could turn out to be like Paris, *Alexandros theoeidês*, all *Schein* and no *Sein*, an indolent golden boy who relies on looks to get by. Or he could be like Euryalus—arrogant, but essentially educable. In fact, each of these two thematic alternatives is displayed in the course of the *Odyssey*. The adjective *theoeidês* is used three times to describe one or other of the pair of chief suitors on Ithaca, the arrogant young men Eurymachus and Antinous (*Odyssey* 4.628, 21.186, 21.277). They are the Paris types, whose behavior clashes with that of Telemachus. The repentant type is also described in the figure of the seer Theoclymenus, to whom the epithet is applied five times, and whose very name “god-hearing” fits the meaning of *theoeidês*. When this young man, a fugitive because he slew a kinsman, encounters Telemachus (*Odyssey* 15.256–81), we see an important stage in the growth of the latter: without questioning, he takes in the outlaw, thus showing how he has assimilated the code of guest-friendship—precisely the skill that the

⁴⁰ Murnaghan 1987, 3–55.

⁴¹ See my analysis in Martin 1984a, 29–48.

⁴² See, with further bibliography, Tracy 1990, 3–26 and J. H. Finley 1978.

suitors conspicuously failed to learn. The meeting of characters who are described with the epithet *theoeidês* therefore encapsulates a key theme in the poem, as it also characterizes Telemachus.

To sum up my first two observations on characterizing by epithets: the very occurrence of an epithet signals the presence of an important theme when Telemachus first comes into view. The theme, in turn, comes to be more explicitly examined in the course of the poem, before the action returns to Ithaca. At that point, Homer's poetic art has a way of wrapping up the theme by a ring composition. When we see Telemachus again in the hall in Book 17, the poet describes him with a line identical to this line in Book 1, except for the initial object pronoun (*Odyssey* 17.328). The line refers to Telemachus' noticing Eumaeus before anyone else does. He nods to the swineherd and arranges a private conversation (*Odyssey* 17.330–34). Repetition here works in a slightly different way than does the recurrent epithet. An audience gets more meaning from the second occurrence of the line because the audience recalls the first use and its context. By Book 17 Telemachus has matured, and the repeated line enables us to juxtapose this scene with the earlier one. In Book 1, when Telemachus receives Mentès, who is actually the disguised Athena, he leaps nervously to the door; after seating his guest, he bombards him with a breathless account of his own sorry state before even asking where Mentès comes from (*Odyssey* 1.158–71). By contrast, Telemachus in Book 17 does not rush to talk; he barely talks at all; a single nod accomplishes all he wants. When Telemachus does speak, it is only to utter a laconic three-liner: "Give the stranger this food; tell him to beg from all the suitors. For a man in need, a sense of shame's no good" (*Odyssey* 17.345–47). The characterization of Telemachus thus works through a process of careful differentiation. The formulaic element—whether the word *theoeidês* or a repeated line—provides the core that enables us to think of Telemachus as a consistent character at all. On the other hand, the repetition in different contexts of the formulaic elements lets us construct a three-dimensional picture of the hero. He is not, after all, just godlike in appearance; he is a person who notices things, who gets the point, before all others, *polu prôtos*.

Does it make a difference that Telemachus is called *theoeidês* when we first see him in the *Odyssey*, rather than one of his other epithets in the nominative: *hierê is*, *pepnumenos*, or *hêrôs*? I think it does, precisely because we first *see* him. This is my third observation on the epithet. His three other epithets all assert some knowledge on the part of the poet of Telemachus' inner state: his "holy strength" or "prudence" or that he is a "hero." But

when we the audience first see Telemachus, we don't yet know what he is like. Therefore, in this all-important curtain-raising epithet, Homer takes the part of his audience. He refers to Telemachus' appearance only. When Telemachus speaks later in Book 1, he can be called "prudent" (*pepnumenos*), because at that point we hear as much from his own words.⁴³ Finally, there is the clever etymological play in this single line that introduces Telemachus. The young man saw (*ide*) Mentēs: we see *him* precisely at the moment when he sees someone else. And to add to this, we see that he has a certain look (*theo-eid-ēs*—built on the root **wid* "to see"). To complete this *tour de force* introduction, Homer tells us that Telemachus, until he catches sight of the visitor, had been viewing mentally (*ossomenos*) another prospect: that his father would return and scatter the suitors to the winds. It is significant that we cannot see Telemachus without instantly hearing of his father. Part of the interest of the rest of the plot will come from seeing how far Telemachus can distinguish himself from his father; the process has not yet started when we first see him. Such self-conscious mirroring, the reflecting of our gaze in that of the young hero, is hardly an accident of a mechanistic application of formulas. Instead, this initial scene works as an elegant piece of exposition and intentional characterization. Possible confirmation that Homer here builds up a motif complex of *seeing well* / *looking good* comes from Book 17 again. Just before the line that repeats this introductory line (*Odyssey* 17.328) comes the most famous and pathetic scene of gazing in the poem, when poor flea-bitten Argos notices the master who left him twenty years ago, strains his ears, wags his tail, and dies (*Odyssey* 17.301–27). The Homer who so ironically named this dog "Flash" (Argos) could well have played again on the fascination with sight and appearances generated out of the single epithet *theoeidēs*.

The epithet system's importance in characterization has justified the effort thus far to show just how much we can use it. With the other three elements of characterization in which oral-formulaic technique plays a part, I will more briefly show how they build up the specific theme of Telemachus' growth into authority. I have already alluded to the second mode of the technique: the way in which Homer frames speeches. The epithet system comes into play here, since the adjective *pepnumenos*, as Austin recognized, only occurs when the poet uses it to say "Telemachus spoke" in some form.⁴⁴

⁴³ Austin 1975, 75–78 well draws out the complimentary associations of this epithet, but does not notice the narrative sequencing of epithet usage.

⁴⁴ Austin 1975, 74.

Beyond this, however, there is another speech-framing device that characterizes the hero even more explicitly. This is Homer's employment of the word *mûthos*. I have come to the definition of this word as "authoritative utterance" after close reading of the formulaic expressions in which the word appears in Homer. To summarize the system, which I outline fully in *The Language of Heroes*: of the two main words for speech in Homer, *mûthos* is the marked term and *epos* the unmarked. *Mûthos* refers to important speeches that accomplish something, or to performative utterances. *Epos* can be used for any utterance.⁴⁵ In other words, by naming some speech act *mûthos* Homer foregrounds the particular words. In terms of this system it is highly significant that Telemachus is shown to exercise with increasing authority the type of speech called *mûthos*. The first example comes in Book 1. Towards the end of the scene in the hall, Telemachus' mother descends from her quarters to tell the bard to stop singing that sad song about the return of the Achaeans from Troy. Telemachus, somewhat intemperately it may seem, comes to the defense of Phemius the poet with an apology worthy of any beleaguered broadcast network (*Odyssey* 1.347–52):

Poets are not responsible; Zeus, somehow, is responsible
 who gives to bread-winning men, to each, what he wants.
 There is no reason to fault the singing of the Danaans' bad fate.
 People celebrate more the song that comes latest to the hearers.

When this little speech is over, Homer describes it while mentioning Penelope's reaction to it (*Odyssey* 1.361): "Marveling, she went back to the house / for she put her son's prudent *mûthos* in her heart." With this one touch, Homer characterizes the speaker Telemachus as an important rhetorician and a power in the house. The next speech by Telemachus reinforces the sense we get of his increasing power. Now that Athena has put strength in his spirit, as she promised, Telemachus can speak with a *mûthos*, an authoritative utterance. At *Odyssey* 1.367 Homer frames Telemachus' speech to the suitors, saying "Telemachus the prudent began the *mûthoi*." The topic of this public rhetoric actually focuses on a further *mûthos*, as Telemachus says that tomorrow all will sit in assembly; at that time, he will make another speech (*mûthos*) "telling you off without regret" (*Odyssey* 1.373). Once again, a sense of the formulaic nature of Homeric art can lead us to larger conclusions here. For the phrase just translated, *mûthon apêlegeôds apoeipô*, is found only one other place in all Homer. Achilles introduces his magnificent speech to the

⁴⁵ Martin 1989, 1–42.

Embassy in *Iliad* 9 with these words (*Iliad* 9.309). Rather than seeing this as a borrowing by the *Odyssey* poet from the *Iliad*, it makes more sense to say that both occurrences of this half-line expression shed light on one another. This is the language of a young hero making a crucial pronouncement to an audience that wants him to do something else. We may recall that there are other resemblances as well between Achilles and Telemachus. In the speech in Book 2 that Telemachus forecasts here, he will end up throwing a scepter to the ground, just as Achilles does in *Iliad* 1. Again, characterization happens by means of slight differences between otherwise similar scenes. For Telemachus on throwing the scepter bursts into tears; Achilles precedes his gesture with an image-packed speech, but never cries. We might wonder whether the gesture is itself a stock one in archaic rhetoric. Perhaps it is planned by Telemachus, or even resembles the art of Homer in being both spontaneous and yet formulaic. At any event, it punctuates and sets off Telemachus' speaking ability, the art that Homer has made us focus on by calling it *mûthos*.

The third category of the technique of characterizing Telemachus within this medium of oral-formulaic poetry has to do with the rhetoric of his actual speeches. To examine even a single speech of one character takes a long time because one finds that every word has significant patterning attached to it, formulaic uses that could remind an audience of a number of associations.⁴⁶ One example from the speech just cited will suffice to show how what one can call "speech type-scenes" help us understand a character. Just as we see more meaning in an arming scene or a feasting scene by comparing it with all the other instances of the type-scene, so too we can learn by examining repeated speech strategies that depend on the same sort of utterances. One can compare, for example, speeches that tell someone to do something or prayers or insults. Of course, the patterning in these genres can come from actual sociolinguistic use as much as from poetry. Homer tends to stylize strategies that we can note in the rhetoric of everyday life.⁴⁷ When we hear someone utter the formulaic phrase words, "Let me handle this," we begin to construct the character of the speaker (e.g., s/he is the take-charge sort) and evaluate the appropriateness of the utterance to the situation at hand. A similar opportunity for imagining character arises at *Odyssey* 1.358–59: Telemachus concludes his speech to Penelope by saying "go back to your quarters and do your own work and tell the maids to do theirs; big talk

⁴⁶ Martin 1989, 167–205.

⁴⁷ Martin 1989, 43–88.

[*mûthos*] will be a care to men, to all of them, especially me. For the power in the house belongs to this one.” His words sound like those of an authoritative character, or one who strives to be. Yet when we compare this strategy of speaking with its occurrence in two other places, it appears that Telemachus is less the big man than he seems; or at least the issue is more complicated. At *Odyssey* 11.352–53, Alcinous, the king of the Phaeacians, asserts that the arrangement of Odysseus’ trip home will be his doing: “the send-off [*pompê*] will be a care to men, to all of them, especially me. For the power in the *dêmos* belongs to this one.”

But why does he feel compelled to say this? Because his wife Arete has anticipated his utterance just before this, when she elicits even more gifts from the Phaeacians (*Odyssey* 11.336–41) by reminding them of their wealth and the guest’s needs. It takes the intervention of an old retainer, Echeneos, to readjust protocol. Arete does not speak authoritatively (*mûtheitai*) off the mark, he says (*Odyssey* 11.344–45), but Alcinous is in charge here; at this point the king asserts his power. Given what we know about the Phaeacians from Books 6 through 8, we can say that Arete *is*, in fact, the power on this island; Nausicaa, the princess, has pointedly told Odysseus to bypass the jovial but ineffectual king and go straight to Arete when he wants to beg his way home (*Odyssey* 6.310–12). This means that, in context, the formulaic speech strategy “X will be a care to me: I have the power” has overtones of being attached to one who is in fact still powerless. We can read this association as well in the most famous occurrence of this speaking strategy, at *Iliad* 6.490–93. Hector has ended his tender meeting with Andromache, who has tried to restrain him from reentering the fight on the field. “Go home; war [*polemos*] will be a care to men, especially me,” he concludes. He cannot say, “for I have the power” since technically Priam is still in charge, it seems, so the line ends instead “who [the men] have been born in Troy.” If we read these words with his previous statement in mind—“no one can escape his fate” (6.488)—we hear not an assertion of actual authority but once more a more desperate attempt to wrest some power from position, *precisely when* the speaker knows he does not have the authority. Alcinous and Hector are both upstaged; coming back to *Odyssey* 1, we can now expect that a traditional audience familiar with this speaking mode would hear irony in Telemachus’ words. He *thinks* he can handle the situation on Ithaca, but he still has a lot to learn.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The last occurrence of the “leave it to me” trope in the *Odyssey* combines features of the interactions in *Odyssey* Books 1 and 11. After Penelope has skillfully rejected attempts by Antinous and Eurymachus to block the disguised Odysseus from trying the great bow (*Odyssey* 21.311–42),

The fourth feature that effects characterization admittedly occurs in any narrative fiction. However, the precise use of this feature, which has been called narrative focalization, as we see it in the *Odyssey* emerges from the particular setting of oral-performance poetry.⁴⁹ Focalization has to do with the way in which information is selected and channeled from the viewpoint of the author, character, or characters who implicitly “see” (as distinguished from narrate) the action. An internal focalizer is a figure within the tale whose privileged viewpoint determines the flow of the narrative. With the constraints of focalization in mind, we might notice now that our *Odyssey* opens with a conspicuous gap when it comes to the situation on Ithaca.

The only hint that there is anything untoward happening on the home island comes just after the proem when Odysseus’ homecoming is alluded to (*Odyssey* 1.18):

οὐδ’ ἔνθα πεφυγμένος ἦεν ἀέθλων

Not even there had he escaped contests.

A bit further on, the description of Odysseus that Zeus gives early in Book 1 is an apt example of how the suitor problem on Ithaca is elided (*Odyssey* 1.65–67):

πῶς ἂν ἔπειτ’ Ὀδυσῆος ἐγὼ θείοιο λαθοίμην,
ὃς περὶ μὲν νόον ἐστὶ βροτῶν, περὶ δ’ ἰρὰ θεοῖσιν
ἀθανάτοισιν ἔδωκε ...

How could I forget Odysseus the godly
who excels mortals in consciousness and to the gods
immortal gave sacrifices beyond the rest?

The only hint of what is happening on Ithaca then comes in Athena’s words to Zeus at lines 1.88–91:

Telemachus dismisses her with lines exactly matching his earlier rebuke (*Odyssey* 1.356–59 = *Odyssey* 21.350–53), except for the substitution of *toxon* “bow” for *mûthos* at *Odyssey* 21.352, and she complies as in Book 1. As in Scheria, the issue involves the authority to give orders. That Telemachus is still not as fully heroic as his father is, however, ironically clear from the anticlimactic phrasing of his opening assertion (*Odyssey* 21.344–45): “Mother, as for the bow, no one of the Achaeans besides me is stronger ... at giving [it] and denying it to whomever I want.” We might instead have expected Telemachus to claim that he is the best at stringing and shooting the weapon, not just at controlling access.

⁴⁹ On the term and its uses, see Genette 1980, 189–94 and Prince 1987, 32.

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν Ἰθάκηνδε ἐλεύσομαι, ὄφρα οἱ υἷὸν
 μᾶλλον ἐποτρύνω καὶ οἱ μένος ἐν φρεσὶ θεῖω,
 εἰς ἀγορὴν καλέσαντα κάρη κομόωντας Ἀχαιοὺς
 πᾶσι μνηστήρεσσιν ἀπειπέμεν ...

But I shall go to Ithaca, so that I might rouse
 his son and place *menos* in his heart
 so that once he has called the long-haired Achaeans to assembly
 he might order away all the suitors.

Athena introduces the mention of the suitors as if who they are and whom they are wooing *were already well known*. But there has been absolutely no mention of *mnêstêres* up to this point. It is a discourse universal that one needs to know certain things in a narrative; first-mentions are crucial; narrative figures are not simply intruded without identification. What happens in the *Odyssey* is different from the expected convention of a well-constructed narrative opening, for some artful reasons.

First, this narrative gap can be explained if we assume the audience knows the story of Odysseus through a number of versions, which is to say, if we assume a *traditional oral-performance* audience. They know who the suitors are even if we, the uninitiated readers, do not. Let me tease out the implications of this point. The shape of the narrative makes us imagine an audience that has heard the story before. But this goes against precisely the thing that Telemachus has identified as the key quality of a poetic narrative—its novelty. This remark was earlier in this analysis deemed “ironic.” We could get around this awkward disagreement over the art of narrative, the difference between Homer vs. Telemachus, by saying that Telemachus is referring to the *style* of a narrative; but it is clear from the language of his speech at *Odyssey* 1.336–44 that he is thinking about information content, poetry as news. He says people like the “newest” story; but the *Odyssey* itself, at least the part about suitors wooing Penelope, has to be an *old story*. In fact, as many have pointed out, the themes of the *Odyssey* make it look like a very old story indeed.⁵⁰ After all, it shares motifs with a number of earlier ancient Near Eastern texts, especially the Gilgamesh epic. The most one can say at this stage is that there is a tension between the professed ideology of poetry that we see displayed in Telemachus’ speech and the compositional realities of the *Odyssey*. Or perhaps Telemachus, not yet being fully perceptive, does not know how poetry works; in the words of Pietro Pucci, he is an

⁵⁰ See J. M. Foley 1987.

“intoxicated reader” who values poetry on the basis of its power to charm.⁵¹ If Homer is silently showing us a young man with a bad head for literary criticism, then we have yet another touch of characterization that seems to fit the earlier picture of Telemachus as a learner. If, on the other hand, we read Telemachus as claiming that the best songs are completely new compositions, in a larger sense, then what he says is in perfect accord with what Lord and others have taught us about oral performance: every composition, no matter how old its themes and expressions, is a brand new work because it has a different shape based on the ever-changing relation between audience and performer.⁵²

In the “gap” just mentioned—the failure to introduce the suitors properly as a plot element—there is a further point relevant to characterization. If we look at what is happening here in terms of literary pragmatics, it appears that only one person *in the narrative* can be assumed to know about the suitors without introduction. Only one character is keyed in to the action on Ithaca enough that he can recognize who the suitors and their object are without being told. That character is, of course, Telemachus. In other words, the *Odyssey* as it starts is filtered to us through the eyes and ears of Telemachus, even before we begin the adventures of the young hero within the Telemachy. In narratological terms, he is the internal focaliser of the action: although he is not the narrator, we still see the action as he would see it. This is the most important although least obvious device for Homer’s characterization of Telemachus. Not only is he godlike in *eidos*, an apprentice at learning *mûthos* skills, and still somewhat in his mother’s control in Book 1. He is like us, and we are like him, both in the position of audience for the heroic past. It has been noticed before that just as Telemachus only now learns about his father, so too we must pick up hints through the journey of Telemachus to gain an understanding of Odysseus.⁵³ But I want to stress how firmly embedded this conditioning is in terms of the narrative’s point of view. If we take this focalization process seriously, we can explain also why Eumaeus the swineherd is the only person addressed consistently in the second person by the poet: “O my swineherd” (*Odyssey* 14.165, etc.). He has been, after all, the closest male to Telemachus on Ithaca. Even the suitors are represented as thinking that if Telemachus is missing from town he must be out at the swineherd’s hut (*Odyssey* 4.640). The use of the second-person

⁵¹ Pucci 1987, 201–8.

⁵² Lord 1960 *passim*, esp. 148–57.

⁵³ See with further bibliography Apthorp 1980, esp. 12–16.

address to Patroclus in the *Iliad* can be explained as the reflex of focalization through Achilles, which in turn is attested by the dictional overlaps between the *Iliad* poet and his main hero.⁵⁴ So too here the use of second-person address goes hand in hand with Telemachus as focalizer. *He* is the person within the narrative most likely to address Eumaeus this way, in ordinary discourse; *his* point of view then gets extended to the telling of the narrative itself, as the poet and the focalizer of narration often coincide.

I want to conclude by returning to the “last hero song” of my title and speculating about what it means in terms of the *Odyssey*’s overall thematics to have Telemachus, the gateway to this poem, characterized as he is in the formulaic ways I have shown. We receive the poem filtered through an internal audience who desires and listens to Odysseus’ story. This audience of one, Telemachus, has his own small adventure story, the goal of which is to gain fame as well as information (cf. *Odyssey* 1.94–95). But we cannot fail to notice that Telemachus at the end of the poem is back in a subordinate position. As in a pedimental sculpture, he flanks his father along with his grandfather Laertes in Book 24. Even if he has grown, he is still not the power in the house. Furthermore, even by the end of the poem, Telemachus has not filled the role of his father in one crucial respect: while *pepnumenos*, he is not *polumêtis*. Odysseus descends from tricksters, is a trickster in this poem, and continues to be one in the long tradition of Western literature.⁵⁵ His son never has the opportunity: the trickster’s only son has failed to follow the tradition.

If we join this observation to a series of other oddities about the *Odyssey*—for example, its ethical stance—it becomes clearer that the poem itself speaks of the end of a tradition.⁵⁶ One can see this most clearly in the underworld scenes of Book 24, a send-off to the entire heroic world of Troy. The heroes are all gone. In the beginning of the poem the Telemachy exists, I think, because the *Odyssey* dwells thereby on the problem of its own transmission. How can oral poets compose if the audience is made up of young men like Telemachus? Can stories change the hearer? Can Telemachus be educated? Yes, the *Odyssey* seems to say tentatively; but then Telemachus becomes different and the old world that made the stories

⁵⁴ Martin 1989, 235–36.

⁵⁵ On Odysseus as trickster, see Russo 1993. I thank Prof. Russo for having let me see the page proofs of his chapter ahead of publication.

⁵⁶ On the problems of Odyssean ethics, see the convincing arguments of Nagler 1990 in favor of reading the poem partly as ancient ideological justification for domestic violence.

passes away with his father's last voyage outward.⁵⁷ To a traditional audience, such as we can reconstruct by extensive reference to comparative folk materials, the omission of a trickster's career or heroic story for Telemachus must be extremely significant; these gaps say something important about the story. By preposing the Telemachy and thus foregrounding the whole problem of father-son relations, the poet of the *Odyssey* made a conscious attempt to perform a poem about the *end* of tradition. Moreover, to speak of the end of heroic tradition, tailing out with the quite ordinary Telemachus, is also to comment on the end of a poetic tradition, epic verse as practiced by the poet of the *Odyssey* itself, for the two are symbiotic. The point is perhaps not as clear for modern audiences. Yet what we know of the sociology of oral performance transmission can show that the usual mode of a singer's development depends on learning traditional epic songs from his (or her) father.⁵⁸ It becomes more significant in this specific regard that the *Odyssey* sets up, then dashes, audience expectations about the character of the hero's son. We never see Telemachus perform; he never tells his story; our attention is shifted from son to father, who then outdoes even the poet Homer (so it seems) by holding audience attention for the space of four books narrated by himself. Rather than being an adventure story with an extra bit tacked on the beginning (as Analysts view it) or a meditation on ambiguity, disguise, language, and the Text (as modern Unitarians would construe it), the *Odyssey*, thus, in this metapoetic reading, is a much more context-bound and specific performance by a poet concerned about the very social conditions that might (but eventually, in fact, failed to) allow epic art to grow. Telemachus is the emblem of that ending.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ In placing the theme of father-son relations in this framework, I seek to explore yet another layer of the theme recently discussed, in its relation to Hesiodic ideology, by Arrighetti 1991.

⁵⁸ Cf. Zygas 1974, which documents the shrinking of the performers' knowledge of epic over four generations. See also Lord 1960, 22–26 on learning epic songs from the father in Serbo-Croatian traditions.

⁵⁹ The most important work on Telemachus published in the years since this chapter was written is Petropoulos 2011, a full-scale and elegant analysis of the figure and its poetic resonances. The latest critical approach to the problematic of characterization in Homer is Kozak 2017.

UNTIL IT ENDS VARIETIES OF ILIADIC ANTICIPATION¹

What is the *Iliad* waiting for? As we ponder various pathways that any long poem might have taken, the question of epic proportion grows into musing on meaning and technique. What is gained by having the *Iliad* end when it does? How does it finally manage, after more than 15,000 lines, to reach its goal? Until then, how does the poem keep its audience engaged?²

Like most mysteries of Homeric verbal art, such questions lure the critic into a garden of forking paths. One route, as regards the question of Iliadic massiveness, leads through—perhaps ultimately, only *into*—the tangled undergrowth of situated performance. The narrative arc of the *Iliad* may have evolved over generations to fit extended composition-in-performance or recitation at a festival, plausibly an event lasting three days and thereby accommodating (if not requiring) a poem of heroic proportion, divisible into three performance segments. The core of the idea can be traced back to Wade-Gery, whose theory, as is frequent with such attempts, led him to a more positivist solution, fixing the place and time of the composition of the *Iliad* as the Panionion at Mycale, sometime in the eighth century.³ Oliver Taplin's sensitive poetic analysis supported the notion that the poem could have been performed in a non-competitive festival context over three successive days, with suspenseful breaks marking off the action at two major junctures.⁴ In the latest and most historically grounded scenario for the role of

¹ This essay will also be published in a forthcoming festchrift for Philippe Rousseau, Lille.

² It is a pleasure to dedicate this brief meditation to Philippe Rousseau, whose provocative works on time, plot, and structure in the *Iliad* have long enlightened and inspired me.

³ Wade-Gery 1952.

⁴ Taplin 1992, 11–41.

a non-Athenian festival in crystallizing the *Iliad*, Douglas Frame has postulated a division of the two major epics into six rhapsodic performance units apiece, corresponding to the number of *poleis* in the Ionian Dodecapolis.⁵

Meanwhile, Gregory Nagy has developed a detailed argument over the past twenty years illustrating the primary importance of the Panathenaic competitions in Athens for the crystallization of our Homeric texts.⁶ The Panathenaic connection is surely of the highest significance. It helps explain, among other phenomena, the persistent notices of a “Peisistratean” recension of Homeric texts, the Attic coloration of the Homeric *Kunstsprache*, and references to cults of heroes and divinities (Athena, Erechtheus) that would have the most resonance within Athens. Without going deeply into the disputed details of rhapsodic procedure, or the vexed question of time limitations, we can at least acknowledge that the “monumentality” of the *Iliad* owes more to the external conditions of its shaping and transmission in performance than it does to the romanticized ambitions of a single genius composer “Homer.” That such a figure may have existed is not ruled out; that he is at least a compelling imaginative construct is certain; that he had anything to do with the *Iliad* as we have it is more doubtful.⁷

The other pathway branching off this particular fork in the road leads us into a slightly less contested area, offered by internal analysis of the devices of epic, for which the rigorous analysis of formulaic diction carried out by Milman Parry in his Sorbonne *thèses* still provides the most illuminating scholarly model.⁸ The flurry of work centered on Homeric diction, which flourished from the 1960s through 1980s, has tapered off somewhat. Or, put another way, we might say that the demonstration by Parry and later Albert Lord of the oral-traditional character of Homeric diction has now become canonical. The results that shocked and disturbed scholars fifty years ago are now taken for granted. Nevertheless, it bears repeating that the medium of Homeric formulaic art, due to its conservative nature, affords the interpreter of the *Iliad* access to a bundle of systems along which signification in the epic flows—the synapses, as it were, of the performing poetic brain. Most familiar, of course, are those systems represented by the noun and epithet combinations that Parry originally organized and analyzed. But, as

⁵ Frame 2009, 515–620.

⁶ Most recently in Nagy 2010. A useful summary with reference to his earlier work can be found in his recent review (Nagy 2014) of Skafte Jensen’s *Writing Homer* (2011).

⁷ On the imaginary projections of this figure, see Graziosi 2002, and also J. M. Foley 1998.

⁸ Parry 1971 contains the translated *thèses* and other papers.

has become increasingly clear, systematicity of meaning and expression at the micro-level of the phrase extends much further.⁹ In brief, it becomes easier with each passing year to appreciate Meillet's challenging dictum from 1923 (in *Les origines indo-européennes des mètres grecs*): everything in Homer is formulaic.¹⁰

My attempt to answer the questions with which I began, concerning the goal of the *Iliad* and the narrative means of attaining it (or putting it off), involves two sorts of internal analysis based on recurrent phraseology. The first, of a more global literary-semantic nature, examines expressions for eventuality, specifically those headed by the repeated phrase *eis ho ke* ("until the point that; until such time as"). The phrase, as much as any noun-epithet combination, has the status of a formula within Homeric usage, whatever its character might have been in ordinary unmarked Greek speech. Collecting and ordering such examples will reveal the range of situations that the *Iliad* conceptualizes as possible outcomes to waiting in all its forms (suspended action, retardation, prevention, and suppression). At the same time, it can give us an idea of the time-range within which the fulfillment of such outcomes is imaginable. Finally, it illustrates the crescendo effect produced by a series of anticipations, each as it were itself a foreshadowing of the final goal, which then will turn out to lie beyond the edges of the Iliadic plot. The second internal analysis is localized: a close reading of the chariot race in Book 23 will show that it offers an analogue to the shaping and thematic concerns of the *Iliad* as a whole, as well as the clearest articulation of the poem's final goal.

"Until Such Time"

Twenty-five times in the *Iliad*, a character (and one time, the poetic narrator) uses the prepositional phrase *eis ho* with an immediately adjoined particle *ke* and the subjunctive mood. This occurs pragmatically with a dual focus, to speak of an action that is to be completed in the future, but from the standpoint of the speaker who is highlighting his own present time. We might call these clauses "final," inasmuch as they anticipate results, and "temporal" because they map out a span of time stretching from a deictic center, the *hic*

⁹ Rather than list the dozens of relevant publications, I refer to one compelling and extensive demonstration featuring much further bibliography: Kelly 2007.

¹⁰ On the history of Meillet's view and controversy surrounding it, see de Lamberterie 1997.

et nunc, to a second locus of interest. Given this basic syntactic structure, presumably available for describing any sorts of situations and activities, the *Iliad* poet carefully constrains and stylizes the number of events that are actually described or predicted within a limited sphere of narrative or speech situations. We observe immediately that this poetic restriction is further constrained to occur almost always in character-speech: that is to say, the poet-narrator only once independently refers to an action with limitations of the type “X takes place until Y occurs.” Put another way, this accords with the recognition that the *Iliad* poet rarely *foretells* events in his own voice, choosing instead to have characters speak of the future in foreshadowing speeches.¹¹ When the poet *does* speak of the future, it is not as a limited span, in the manner marked out by *eis ho ke* + subjunctives, but instead through positive assertions with present or future indicatives. Consider, for example, the moment when Achilles, having watched with concern the ebb and flow of battle, summons his companion Patroklos to discover who has been carried off the field (11.601–3):¹²

αἶψα δ' ἑταῖρον ἐὼν Πατροκλῆα προσέειπε
φθελγᾶμενος παρὰ νηός· ὃ δὲ κλισίῃθην ἀκούσας
ἔκμολεν ἴσος Ἄρηϊ, κακοῦ δ' ἄρα οἱ πέλεν ἀρχή.

At once he spoke to his own companion in arms, Patroklos,
calling from the ship, and he heard it from inside the shelter, and
came out
like the war god, and this was the beginning of his evil.

Unlike his fictional speakers, the poet can range confidently in vision over all time periods; what, to his characters, is only a dim anticipation or possibility is, for the narrator, always already established as an event known for having taken place (or not). But this capacious view means paradoxically that the epic poet is more narrowly restricted, unable to speak about a series of temporary end-points in talking about the future. The poet cannot, for instance, say prospectively that anything will take place “until such time as” something else happens. Everything, for the Homeric narrator, has already happened.

A further mark of the stylized formulaic nature of the character-expression *eis ho ke* is its restricted range within the hexameter verse. The twenty-six occurrences are attested at only three positions: line-initial (six

¹¹ On poetic manipulation of the technique, see J. V. Morrison 1992.

¹² All translations are from Lattimore 2011, unless otherwise indicated.

times); occupying the second foot (eight times); and, most often, occupying the fifth foot, after the bucolic diaeresis (twelve times). As we might expect, this constraint accompanies a compositional restriction on the semantic range of such expressions and fits with a certain amount of repetition of dictional elements. Three central types of discourse account for almost all the ways in which characters enunciate, through this expression, their sense about future goals: reference to decisions made under pressure (sometimes embedded in speech-acts of reproach); reference to the eventual fall of Troy; and reference to reaching a goal of motion.

A cluster of examples in Book 7 illustrates the function of this formulaic expression in scenes of decision-making. At the coming of night and the urging of the herald Idaeus, Hector and Ajax agree to postpone their inconclusive duel. As Hector formulates the terms of this temporary pause, conflict will resume the next day until a god makes clear which is the winning side (7.290–92):

νῦν μὲν παυσώμεσθα μάχης καὶ δηϊοτήτος
σήμερον ὕστερον αὖτε μαχησόμεθ' εἰς ὃ κε δαίμων
ἅμμε διακρίνη, δώη δ' ἐτέροισί γε νίκην.

“let us now give over this fighting and hostility
for today; we shall fight again, until the divinity
chooses between us, and gives victory to one or the other.”

Significantly, the process is envisioned as distinguishing (*διακρίνη*) the two sides. This notion, while not inherently tied to the idea of anticipation, will appear toward the end of the poem in close relation to the act of waiting for an ultimate outcome.

Not long after this agreement in Book 7, Priam proposes another shorter period of waiting, repeating the original denotation of the relevant time frame, the grant of victory by a *daimon* (7.375–78):

καὶ δὲ τόδ' εἰπέμεναι πυκινὸν ἔπος, αἴ κ' ἐθέλωσι
παύσασθαι πολέμοιο δυσσηχέος, εἰς ὃ κε νεκροῦς
κήμεν ὕστερον αὖτε μαχησόμεθ' εἰς ὃ κε δαίμων
ἅμμε διακρίνη, δώη δ' ἐτέροισί γε νίκην.

“and to add this solid message, and ask them if they are willing
to stop the sorrowful fighting until we can burn the bodies
of our dead. We shall fight again until the divinity
chooses between us, and gives victory to one or the other.”

A neat example of hexameter expansion, this formulation inserts the secondary specification of a waiting-period (until the burning of corpses) within the primary concern—at which point are the opposing forces to begin battle once more? (Note that the one-on-one duel to which the phrase applied earlier at 7.290–92 is now expanded in context to refer to the clash of both sides in the war.) In other words, with legal-sounding precision the primary pause is defined by exactly how long the secondary pause will take: after the dead are burnt on their pyre, war will resume; that, in turn, will last until one side can manage to claim (god-given) victory.¹³ Once again, the motif will be found in amplified form toward the end of the *Iliad*, where pyre-construction and care of the dead punctuate the increasingly intense rhythm of the war.

In contrast to the legalistic tone of these passages in Book 7, another variety of anticipatory passages is more highly colored. At *Iliad* 3.408–10, Helen replies with indignation to Aphrodite, who has appeared to her in semi-disguised form in order to encourage her to watch Paris fight Menelaus. Helen says that the goddess herself should care for the Trojan:

ἀλλ' αἰεὶ περὶ κείνον ὄϊζυε καὶ ἐ φύλασσε,
εἰς ὃ κ' ἐ σ' ἢ ἄλοχον ποιήσεται ἢ ὃ γε δούλην.
καῖσε δ' ἐγὼν οὐκ εἶμι νεμεσσητὸν δέ κεν εἴη

“but stay with him forever, and suffer for him, and look after him
until he makes you his wedded wife, or makes you his slave girl.
Not I. I am not going to him. It would be too shameful.”

The future imagined by Helen for the goddess is, of course, a fantasy of revenge, based on her own experience of anger and regret. While Aphrodite, as a punishment by the Olympians whom she has distressed, might consort with members of the Trojan extended royal family (e.g., Anchises, in the *Hymn to Aphrodite*), we know she will never be the wife or slave of Paris. In effect, Helen attempts to lay a formal curse on the goddess who has brought her to Troy. But Aphrodite's reply (“do not tease me lest in anger I forsake you and grow to hate you as much as now I terribly love you”) forces her to fall silent.

A similar tone of reproach marks the words of the god Ares to the Trojan fighters at *Iliad* 5.465–66:

¹³ The expanded form is repeated in Idaeus' repetition of Priam's instruction at *Iliad* 7.395–97.

ἐς τί ἔτι κτείνεσθαι ἐάσετε λαὸν Ἀχαιοῖς;
 ἢ εἰς ὃ κεν ἀμφὶ πύλης εὖ ποιητῆσι μάχωνται;

“... how long will you allow the Achaians to go on killing your people?
 Until they fight beside the strong-built gates?”

Here we might note the repetition of questions, the first unmarked and open-ended (“until which point?”), the second marked by a hypothetical end-point (“until the point that they are fighting?”). Furthermore, the second question draws into finer focus the rather general action of the first: instead of asking how long the killing will go on, it transforms the temporal dimension into a spatial equivalent, by adding a visually powerful deictic specification (fighting *at the gates*). In brief, this hortatory speech, with its overtones of frustration and disbelief, does in miniature what the *Iliad* as a whole enacts as the poem turns a tale of seemingly endless siege-warfare into a cinematic representation of a few days of movement back and forth across the plain of Troy: time becomes spatialized.¹⁴

The battlefield exhortation (*Kampfparänesis*) is a well-known sub-genre within Homeric poetry. Alongside the example just cited we might add an indirect version, Nestor’s words to Patroclus at *Iliad* 11.666–67, which the elder hero trusts will be transmitted to the true object of his appeal, Achilles:

ἦ μένει εἰς ὃ κε δὴ νῆες θοαὶ ἄγχι θαλάσσης
 Ἀργείων ἀέκητι πυρὸς δηΐοιο θέρωνται,

“Is he going to wait then till the running ships by the water
 are burned with consuming fire for all the Argives can do ... ?”

Finally in this vein are the much more brutally direct words of Achilles to the Trojans, as he flings the corpse of Lycaon into the river Scamander (*Iliad* 21.133–34):

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς ὀλέεσθε κακὸν μῦρον, εἰς ὃ κε πάντες
τίσετε Πατρόκλοιο φόνον καὶ λοιγὸν Ἀχαιῶν

“And yet even so, die all an evil death, till all of you
 pay for the death of Patroklos and the slaughter of the Achaians”

¹⁴ On the power of the *Iliad* poet to make possible such visualization, see J. S. Clay 2011a.

Like the words of Helen in Book 3, the tone is characterized by desire for revenge, which is here explicitly conceived as collective punishment for the death of his companion Patroclus.

The same speech contains another example of the phrase *eis ho ke* that leads us to the second category of usage, reference to the fall of Troy. A few lines before his promise to avenge his companion's slaying, Achilles shifts from the address to a single victim (the dead Lycaon) to his fellow Trojans and allies, saying "perish until we reach Troy" (*Iliad* 21.128–29):

φθείρεσθ' εἰς ὃ κεν ἄστυ κιχέομεν Ἰλίου ἱοῆς
 ὑμεῖς μὲν φεύγοντες, ἐγὼ δ' ὀπιθεν κραίζων.

"Die on, all; till we come to the city of sacred Ilium,
 you in flight and I killing you from behind ..."

He then remarks parenthetically that the river to which the Trojans have sacrificed will not be a sufficient defense for them and concludes with the threat of lines 21.133–34. Taken together, the two occurrences of the phrase in one rhetorical act produce an equation: his inescapable advance toward the city, slaughtering all in his path, is the beginning of the fulfillment of revenge. The completion of the first stage, however, will be a visible sign of the process of total revenge for Patroclus and the other Achaeans slain at the ships: there is no promise, however, that it will mark the totality of that vengeance. Instead, Achilles, while making the first "until such point" phrase refer to a topographical fact, chillingly leaves open the second anticipatory marker, so that we do not know whether he will exact a numerically precise tit-for-tat or some even greater, psychologically fulfilling counter-attack.

The goal of taking Troy has, of course, structured the entire story of the war, in the mythic materials surrounding the Homeric poems. Within the epic *Iliad* itself, however, this goal appears and recedes, often being occluded by the intra-Achaean strife between Achilles and his comrades. Curiously, it is once more in Book 7 that we find a cluster of clauses headed by *eis ho ke*, this time mentioning the future capture of the city. At *Iliad* 7.29–31 Apollo says to Athena that they should stop the war for now:

νῦν μὲν παύσωμεν πόλεμον καὶ δηϊοτῆτα
 σήμερον ὕστερον αὖτε μαχήσονται εἰς ὃ κε τέκμων
Ἰλίου εὐρώσιν, ἐπεὶ ὥς φίλον ἔπλετο θυμῷ

“For this day let us put an end to the hatred and the fighting now; they shall fight again hereafter, till we witness the finish they make of Ilion, since it is dear to the heart of you ...”

As we saw above, the same diction is used when the mortal speakers discuss the plan to put the war on hold (compare 7.291 with 7.30). In effect, the mortals are only dimly aware that some unnamed god will eventually grant victory and this vagueness of expression contrasts with the divine language that actually names the end of Troy (*tekmôr* being both goal and terminus) as the ultimate point. Slightly later, when Hector issues the challenge to a duel, he traces the failure of the previous oath-taking between enemies in Book 4 to Zeus’ ill will (*Iliad* 7.69–72):

ὄρκια μὲν Κρονίδης ὑψίζυγος οὐκ ἐτέλεσεν,
ἀλλὰ κακὰ φρονέων τεκμαίρεται ἀμφοτέροισιν
εἰς ὃ κεν ἢ ὑμεῖς Τροίην εὐπυργον ἔλητε
ἢ αὐτοὶ παρὰ νηυσὶ δαμείετε ποντοπόροισιν.

“Zeus, son of Cronus, who sits on high, would not bring to fulfillment our oaths, but is found to be of evil intention toward both sides until that day when you storm Troy of the strong towers, or that day when you yourselves are broken beside your seafaring vessels.”

Instead of one side “finding the *tekmôr* of Troy,” in Hector’s version the most that can be said is Zeus “is found to be” blockading success. The verb *tekmairetai* in this context appears to be semantically weakened, meaning “gives signs” but its derivation (as denominative) from *tekmôr* highlights the further nuance of investigation, of “getting to the end” in discovering reality. After specifying what he views as the eventual alternative outcomes for the besieging Achaeans—overcoming the city or being overcome—Hector goes on to make a formal declaration (μυθέομαι, line 76) about a more complex set of alternatives relating to his own possible fate. If he should be killed by the opponent in the upcoming duel, his armor may be carried back as a prize to the Achaean side, but his body must be returned to Troy; if he himself kills the opposing man, says Hector (*Iliad* 7.82–86),

“I will strip his armor and carry it to sacred Ilion
and hang it in front of the temple of far-striking Apollo,
but his corpse I will give back among the strong-benched vessels
so that the flowing-haired Achaeans may give him due burial
and heap up a mound upon him beside the broad passage of Helle.”

Thus far, the alternative pathways result in a comparative balance: armor is retained, bodies are returned. Yet Hector's rhetorical spin on the future scenario of his own death artfully seizes the final advantage (*Iliad* 7.87–91):

“And some day one of the men to come will say, as he sees it,
one who in his benched ship sails on the wine-blue water:
‘This is the mound (*sêma*) of a man who died long ago in battle
who was one of the bravest, and glorious Hektor killed him.’
So will he speak some day, and my glory will not be forgotten.”

The remaining three instances of our target phrase, applied to the fall of Troy, come in close association one with the other. After Agamemnon's disastrously mismanaged “test” of his fighters in Book 2, Odysseus saves the day, urging the Greek troops to stay by recalling in detail the optimistic interpretation by Calchas of a divine sign given to the expedition when it initially gathered at Aulis (*Iliad* 2.331–32):

ἀλλ' ἄγε μίμνετε πάντες εὐκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοὶ
αὐτοῦ εἰς ὃ κεν ἄστυ μέγα Πριάμοιο ἔλωμεν.

“Come then, you strong-greaved Achaians, let every man stay
here, until we have taken the great citadel of Priam.”

A markedly similar practical and rhetorical situation leads to the use of the *eis ho ke* phrase (twice) at the start of Book 9. Diomedes responds to Agamemnon's suggested abandonment of the expedition with a rousing speech dismissing the commander, while pledging that he will remain to see out the end of war (*Iliad* 9.45–49):

ἀλλ' ἄλλοι μενέουσι κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοὶ
εἰς ὃ κέ περ Τροίην διαπέρσομεν. εἰ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ
φευγόντων σὺν νηυσὶ φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν
νῶϊ δ' ἐγὼ Σθένελός τε μαχησόμεθ' εἰς ὃ κε τέκμωρ
Ἰλίου εὔρωμεν· σὺν γὰρ θεῷ εἰλήλουθμεν.

“and yet the rest of the flowing-haired Achaians will stay here
until we have sacked the city of Troy; let even these also
run away with their ships to the beloved land of their fathers,
still we two, Sthenelos and I, will fight till we witness
the end of Ilion; for it was with God that we made our way hither.”

Diomedes in effect picks up and continues the logic of Odysseus as expressed in the earlier passage of Book 2: although the younger hero does not overtly

re-state the reason, the Greeks have come to Troy “with a god” because it was Calchas who implied as much. Thus it is appropriate that Diomedes’ speech is received in almost exactly the same manner as the earlier authoritative utterance (*mûthos*) by Odysseus. Compare *Iliad* 9.50–51:

᾽Ως ἔφαθ’, οἳ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ἐπὶ ἄλχον νῆες Ἀχαιῶν
μῦθον ἀγασσάμενοι Διομήδεος ἱπποδάμοιο.

with *Iliad* 2.333–35:

᾽Ως ἔφατ’, Ἀργεῖοι δὲ μέγ’ ἰαχον, ἀμφὶ δὲ νῆες
 σμερδαλέον κονάβησαν ἀϋσάντων ὑπ’ Ἀχαιῶν,
μῦθον ἐπαινήσαντες Ὀδυσσεύς θεῖοιο.¹⁵

The first two categories of poetic deployment, as we have seen, of the phrase *eis ho ke* in the *Iliad* are narrowly limited to certain speech-acts and speech-situations. The third, while more broad-ranging in terms of the situations to which it applies, is nevertheless strictly kept within a small semantic range, relating to motion toward a goal. It is this final category that will lead us into the longer interpretation of an important passage from the end of the poem.

The relevant lines are easily grouped around the verbs employed in the anticipatory clauses. For the verb “come” we find the following formulaic set, with varying subjects of the verb:

Iliad 10.62 (Menelaus to Agamemnon):

αὐθι μένω μετὰ τοῖσι δεδεγμένος εἰς ὃ κεν ἔλθης,
 ἦε θέω μετὰ σ’ αὐτίς, ἐπὴν εὖ τοῖς ἐπιτείλω;

Iliad 14.77 (Agamemnon to Nestor):

ἔλκωμεν, πάσας δὲ ἐρύσσομεν εἰς ἅλα δῖαν,
 ὕψι δ’ ἐπ’ εὐνάνων ὀρμίσσομεν, εἰς ὃ κεν ἔλθῃ
νῦξ ἀβρότη, ἦν καὶ τῇ ἀπόσχονται πολέμοιο

Iliad 21.231 (Scamander to Apollo):

εἰρύσαιο Κρονίωνος, ὃ τοι μάλα πόλλ’ ἐπέτελλε
 Τρωσὶ παρεστάμεναι καὶ ἀμύνειν, εἰς ὃ κεν ἔλθῃ
δεῖελος ὀψὲ δύων, σκιάσῃ δ’ ἐρίβωλον ἄρουραν.

¹⁵ On the speech of Odysseus and its reception see now Elmer 2013, 98–102.

Iliad 21.531 (Priam to Trojan guards):

πεπταμένως ἐν χερσὶ πύλας ἔχετ' εἰς ὃ κε λαοὶ
ἔλθωσι προτὶ ἄστυ πεφυζότες· ἦ γὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
ἐγγὺς ὅδε κλονέων νῦν οἷω λοίγι' ἔσεσθαι.

A related set of lines centers around the verb “arrive,” which functions deictically in context as the complement to “come,” since it refers to arrival at a place apart from where the speaker stands:

Iliad 16.455 (Hera to Zeus concerning Sarpedon):

πέμπειν μιν θάνατόν τε φέρειν καὶ νήδυμον ὕπνον
εἰς ὃ κε δὴ Λυκίης εὐρείης δῆμον ἴκωνται,
ἔνθά ἐ ταρχύσουσι κασίγνητοί τε ἔται τε

Three passages use closely related diction that features both verbs “arrive” and “come”:

Iliad 11.193 (Zeus to Iris concerning Hector) = 11.208 (Iris) = 17.454 (Zeus, with ἀφίκωνται):

εἰς ἵππους ἄλεται, τότε οἱ κράτος ἐγγυαλίξω
κτείνειν εἰς ὃ κε νῆας εὖσσελμους ἀφίκηται
δύη τ' ἠέλιος καὶ ἐπὶ κνέφας ἰερόν ἔλθη.

Only two passages fail to fit the configurations thus far remarked on. In *Iliad* 12.149–50, the epic narrator describes the resistance of two Lapith heroes against the Trojan onslaught, comparing them to two wild boars. The passage is unique in being the only simile to employ *eis ho ke* and the only time the phrase is used in diegetic, rather than mimetic, speech:

πρυμνὴν ἐκτάμνοντες, ὑπαὶ δέ τε κόμπος ὀδόντων
γίγνεται εἰς ὃ κέ τις τε βαλὼν ἐκ θυμὸν ἔλῃται·

and as they go tearing slantwise and rip the timber about them
to pieces at the stock, the grinding scream of their teeth sounds
high, until some man hits them with his throw and takes the life from
them;

In *Iliad* 14.5–7 Nestor comforts the wounded Machaon:

ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν νῦν πῖνε καθήμενος αἵθοπα οἶνον
εἰς ὃ κε θεομᾶ λοετρὰ ἐϋπλόκαμος Ἑκαμήδη

θερμήνη καὶ λούση ἄπο βρότον αἱματόεντα

“Now, do you sit here and go on drinking the bright wine,
until Hekamede the lovely-haired makes ready a hot bath
for you, warming it, and washes away the filth of the bloodstains,”

Both of these passages, however, do speak of the treatment of the body, which itself becomes the goal of motion and activity, whether for good or ill. In this way, they resemble the very last, and most important, application of the trope “until such time.” Knowing that his death is to come shortly after that of Hector, whom he has now slain, Achilles transcends his manic anger as he arranges the funeral games for his companion Patroclus. So far has he transcended anxiety about his own fate that at *Iliad* 23.244, before he initiates the first of the athletic events, Achilles calmly directs the Achaeans concerning the proper arrangements for his own cremation and the treatment of his bones (*Iliad* 23.236–44):

“Son of Atreus, and you other greatest of all the Achaians,
first put out with gleaming wine the pyre that is burning,
all that still has on it the fury of fire; and afterward
we shall gather up the bones of Patroklos, the son of Menoitios,
which we shall easily tell apart [εὖ διαγιγνώσκοντες], since they are
conspicuous
where he lay in the middle of the pyre and the others far from him
at the edge burned, the men indiscriminately with the horses.
And let us lay his bones in a golden jar and a double
fold of fat, until I myself am hidden in Hades [εἰς ὃ κεν αὐτὸς ἐγὼν
Ἄϊδι κεύθωμαι].”¹⁶

How does this employment of the phrase fit into the preceding analysis? From the examples of the first two categories, we have seen that *eis ho ke* introduces two major modes of speaking: the hortatory or reproachful, in which a future event, sometimes repugnant, is anticipated verbally in order to convince the addressee of a course of action in the present. Thus Odysseus and Diomedes urge their fellow Greeks to stay on fighting at Troy until it falls (a desired goal); Nestor and Ares urge martial action to prevent worse outcomes (undesired ends, such as more Trojans or Greeks being killed). Even Helen’s attempt to dismiss Aphrodite alludes to an unattractive goal (from the goddess’ point-of-view): being erotically dominated by Paris. In sum, the discourse usages of the first two sets of categories are distinctly

¹⁶ Lattimore translation modified in line 244 to reflect the reading κεύθωμαι.

conative to use the well-known distinction introduced by Roman Jakobson. By contrast, the passages listed in our third category (attaining a goal of motion) are what Jakobson might call referential, or a speech-act critic might identify as constative. Specifying *when* certain actions are scheduled to take place (when day or night comes; when a bath is ready; when persons reach the ships or gates or Lycia), these expressions are more like a narrator's directions for how the plot of a given passage unfolds. To make the point sharper: while some characters (almost always mortals) use *eis ho ke* to try to persuade addressees, others (usually immortals) use the phrasal trope to set the parameters for action.

At another level, we could distinguish the first two categories from the third by labeling the former *character-centered* and the latter *narratological*. Most importantly, Achilles falls squarely in the latter. Furthermore, his command to keep the bones of Patroclus in a golden vessel until his own should be hidden away with them in Hades presents us with the ultimate framing boundary of the saga of Troy. It is a boundary that is still somewhat ambiguous, as it depends on the fall of Troy, to be followed by a burial for the combined bones of Achilles and his beloved friend. Like other Iliadic scenarios we have seen, it thus embeds one goal within another. At the same time, the existence of a tomb that is to be a temporary cenotaph, from the poem's description, is filled out by extra-Iliadic information that Achilles was finally buried in the tumulus at the Hellespont, making it a real tomb. This is the tradition to which the *Odyssey* adheres (*Odyssey* 24.80–84). Despite some uncertainty (where will Achilles' bones lie until final construction of the larger tomb?), there can be no doubt that Achilles' use of *eis ho ke* provides the most capacious, all-embracing viewpoint when contrasted with the other speakers' speech strategies we have seen.¹⁷

Meanwhile, from a narratological perspective, we can sum up at this point by observing that the *eis ho ke* formula illuminates one key manner through which the poetic voice controls and retards action. Through the frequent setting up of internal goals, both as imaginative markers of ultimate actions ("until they sack Troy") or practical markers of intermediate movements ("until they reach the gates"), both varieties being projected through the voices of characters, the narrator of the *Iliad* constructs a nested, modular tale, each segment pointing toward a future time when it will be completed, even as the individual episode slows down progress toward the ultimate

¹⁷ On the traditions of Achilles' burial, both poetic and myth-historical, see Burgess 2009.

end of the poem.¹⁸ We can, through studying formulaic use of conjunction phrases, thus make finer-grained analyses in support of the valuable observations of such interpreters as Cedric Whitman, Keith Stanley, and Bruce Heiden, who have labored to unpack the “geometric” and related large-scale orderings of this remarkable epic.¹⁹

The Poem as Race

At this juncture, it is necessary to return to the longer Book 23 passage headed by Achilles’ precise command about burial arrangement. The examples we have looked at, of anticipatory *eis ho ke* specifying a period of waiting, have been shown to operate within a narrow spectrum of situations and meanings. I would now push further and propose that this delimited range is closely tied, in terms of image and diction, to that of a race. Without resorting to allegory, we can observe that the elements of duration, marked goal, determination, and decision-making (as to who comes first, who wins what) are shared by both the war for Troy and the athletic event.²⁰ Therefore, it is entirely appropriate that the *Iliad* as it nears its denouement features a spectacular race, the chariot event sponsored by Achilles. The race is, in short, synecdochic for the poem as a whole.

In recent decades, scholars have articulated more fully the artistry and purposes of this unexpected poetic event, the games for Patroclus.²¹ Chief among the interpreters has been Philippe Rousseau, in a series of articles.²² His brilliant analysis of the ways in which the race precisely reflects the two major death scenes in the poem, those of Patroclus and Hector, is the most powerful reading of the event within its broader Iliadic context, while his delineation of the inherent failings in the racing strategy of the young Antilochus remains the most convincing and detailed explication of a puzzling aspect of the episode.²³

¹⁸ The technique thus enacts on a smaller scale the combination of closure and anticipation that Taplin 1992, 26 identifies as the structuring device for the large, three-part composition, in which markers of narrative-time also serve as signals for performance time.

¹⁹ Whitman 1958; Heiden 2008; Stanley 1993.

²⁰ On the key theme of duration, see now García 2013.

²¹ Taplin 1992, 251–60 provides a good summary. See also the perceptive remarks in Alden 2000, 17–21.

²² Rousseau 1992, 2001, and 2010.

²³ Rousseau 2010, 29–43.

The importance of the episode for broader, even metapoetic, concerns of sign-reading and interpretation has been stressed by Gregory Nagy.²⁴ Following up on its synecdochic qualities, a longer and more detailed narratological analysis of the chariot race might use it as a heuristic device for reflecting on Homeric technique in the larger structure of the *Iliad* as a whole. How are events described in order and simultaneously? What is the *telos* of any given episode and how is this signaled? How are transitions made? What determines how long something (a race or an episode) lasts? Put another way, the ekphrasis of a race might be read as a primer of Homeric narratological principles, in miniature. This work remains to be done. Alex Purves has made a good start with her remarks on the significance of “overtaking” as a window into the key themes of speed and timing in both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.²⁵ It would be worth exploring whether the description of a complex spectator event such as the chariot-race can function as a mirror for the epic’s description of another closely watched contest, the to-and-fro of war.

While not going into such full technical detail here, we might nevertheless observe over a broader expanse how one central theme, allied to a character-type, provides the complicating factor for the race, just as a cognate character generates the major disruption required for the plot of the *Iliad*. Antilochus, out of youthful confidence, ambition, and reckless disregard, disturbs the “proper” order of the race by trying to overtake his elder Menelaus in a narrow defile, a dry river course. Philippe Rousseau has shown in detail how the behavior of Antilochus goes against the advice of his father Nestor concerning the proper employment of “cunning intelligence” (*mêtis*) and is intentionally made conspicuous by its failure.²⁶ While he contrasts this behavior, within the immediate context of the race, with that of Achilles, it is worth pointing out that the Achilles of Book 23 is a changed man. In the overall plot of the *Iliad*, it was his former self, the hot-headed young man with ambitions for god-like honor, who disturbed the “natural order” of the hierarchy of command with similar near-disastrous results. It was Achilles, now the calm presider over the games, who forced his Achaean companions to the brink of destruction by not harnessing up his chariot team; nevertheless his resolve to wait out the war presents as much of a threat as if he had personally intervened to drive the Greeks into a ditch.

²⁴ Nagy 1983.

²⁵ Purves 2011.

²⁶ Rousseau 2010, 29–43.

Even the topographical markers of war and chariot-race, respectively—the Trojans surging toward the Achaean ships and the sea, just as the chariots race from the sea and then back toward it (23.374–75)—present a clear similarity.²⁷ Details of diction and motif reinforce the homology between the *Iliad* and the race, as if the latter were simply the former replicated in smaller, fractal form.²⁸ From the moment when Achilles brings out prizes for the competing horsemen, we are reminded of his own role in the poem, because the men are described as “swift-footed” (ἱππεῦσιν ... ποδώκεσιν, 23.262), with the epithet otherwise almost exclusively reserved for the son of Peleus and memorably enacted in his death-dealing race against Hector (*Iliad* 22.137–223).²⁹ That event from the previous book of the poem, we recall, was itself described by way of explicit comparison to a race of horses at funeral games, clear anticipation of Book 23 (*Iliad* 22.162–64):³⁰

No, they ran for the life of Hektor, breaker of horses.
As when about the turnposts racing single-foot horses
run at full speed, when a great prize is laid up for their winning,
a tripod or a woman, in games for a man's funeral ...

Even though he does not compete, the race at Patroclus' funeral is indirectly expressive of Achilles himself, and not just because he sets its parameters. As he remarks, were he to enter this race, the first prize would inevitably be his, since his horses are immortal, a gift from Poseidon to Peleus (*Iliad* 23.274–79). Thus, Achilles embodies the standard against which all others must rank themselves lower, or in terms of a race metaphor, later. The long “Hymn to Mêtis” delivered by Nestor to Antilochus (*Iliad* 23.311–25) might also summon up recollections of the career of Achilles. He is, after all, the most prominent hero who, we hear elsewhere in the poem, benefited from direct paternal instructions, as recalled by Odysseus and Nestor (*Iliad* 9.252–59, 11.783–84). Phoenix, too, plays the role of mentor, guardian, and father-figure for Achilles (*Iliad* 9.437–43), so that his appointment to be the course

²⁷ Reading ἄψ ἐφ' ἁλὸς with Aristarchus and most MSS.

²⁸ On “fractals” as an analogue for the technique of the Homeric medium, see Morrell 1996.

²⁹ The single exception is the Trojan spy Dolon: *Iliad* 10.316.

³⁰ On the simile, see further Rousseau 2010, 55. Moulton 1977, 80 notes the relationship of this simile to the earlier lines at *Iliad* 22.22–24 comparing Achilles himself to a swift horse with racing chariot.

observer in the chariot race (*Iliad* 23.360–61), while logistically useless (and thus puzzling to many critics), is thematically most apt.³¹

The preparations for the race contain other miniaturized versions of larger *Iliad* narrative strategies. In the listing of champions presenting themselves as contestants, we hear once again snatches of the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* Book 2. For example, Eumelus is singled out at *Iliad* 23.289 as one who “excelled at horsemanship” (ὃς ἵπποσύνη ἐκέκαστο), with the same diction applied in the Catalogue of Ships to Oilean Ajax (*Iliad* 2.350: ἐγγχείη δ’ ἐκέκαστο). This “lesser” Ajax, the only man thus described in the Catalogue, is the hero featured in an inset exchange of angry words with Idomeneus during the race episode (23.473–98). Significantly, apart from the chariot-race, the only other point in the *Iliad* at which we hear of Eumelus is during the same Catalogue, once when his contingent from Pherae in Thessaly is mentioned (2.714) and once when his horses are named best of those that came to Troy (2.763–67). The brief equine biography is worth lingering over, as it perfectly complements the re-appearance of these same mares in the chariot-race of Book 23:

Best by far among the horses were the mares of Eumelus
Pheres’ son, that he drove, swift-moving like birds, alike in
texture of coat, in age, both backs drawn level like a plumb-line.
These Apollo of the silver bow had bred in Pereia,
mares alike, who went with the terror of the god of battle.

The audience for the race—external and internal—knows the reputation of the horses, so that this does not need to be mentioned in the episode itself (where we might expect, at 23.289). In the latter scene, we are told that Eumelus excels at horsemanship, but not that his horses are themselves the best (having been raised by Apollo), while in the earlier mentions of Eumelus within the Catalogue, there is no hint of his surpassingly good equestrian skill, only a reference to his horses’ powers. The two pieces of information fit neatly together without overlap. Commentators have noticed that Apollo’s role as breeder of the mares, alluded to in the Catalogue passage, can explain his anger at Diomedes in the race, at the point when the son of Tydeus is outdistancing Eumelus (*Iliad* 23.383).³² The bond between these two passages becomes even closer when we hear of the mares “flying” (*Iliad* 23.381

³¹ On objections to the role of Phoenix here, see Leaf 1900 ad loc. and Rousseau 2010, 45 n. 80. An oddly subliminal reminder of the presence of Phoenix appears at line 454, when the leading horse seen by Idomeneus is described as being *phoenix* (reddish-brown) with a white *sêma* on its forehead.

³² E.g., Leaf 1900, 499 ad loc.

petesthên) neck-and-neck with Diomedes' stallions, a description reminiscent of the comparison of the very same mares to birds at 2.764 (ὄρνιθας ὕς). It is true that nine other times in the poem, a pair of horses is described through the use of this line-end dual verb form, but in all the other cases except one, there is no explicit basis for taking the verb "fly" almost literally.³³ The exception goes further to prove the significance of the comparison. At *Iliad* 16.149, Xanthus and Balius, the immortal horses of Achilles, are yoked together to pull the chariot of Patroclus into his final battle. These "flew with the breezes" (ἄμα πνοιῇσι πετέσθην), a detail immediately juxtaposed to the recital of their blood-line: the Harpyia Podargê, grazing in a meadow near Oceanus was impregnated by Zephyrus. Little wonder that this pair race as if levitating, since their parents were both winds.

Yet the mares of Eumelus, for all their promise, are poetically outpaced. No sooner do we learn of their status as "by far the best" (μέγ' ἄρισται, 2.763) than the narrator shifts focus and backtracks slightly. Answering in reverse order the double question about the best of men and the best of horses (2.761–62), he elevates Ajax son of Telamon, but only against the background of the *mênis*-plot as it has by now evolved (2.768–70):

Among the men far the best was Telamonian Aias
while Achilleus stayed angry, since he was far best of all of them,
and the horses also, who carried the blameless son of Peleus.

This is to say that the excellence of both Eumelus' mares and the hero Ajax is limited by time, constrained by an unexpressed but all-controlling anticipation, the universal wait for the return of Achilles. At that future point, the temporary "best" performers will fall back into second place. But even the truly best, Achilles, we are reminded, will not ultimately be borne back safely by his team. The return of Achilles' immortal horses to the battle is singled out by the haunting passage in which one of them, Xanthus, foretells his master's death (*Iliad* 19.400–24). They will return—after all, they cannot die—but Achilles, who has accused them of "leaving" Patroclus (19.403 ὡς Πάτροκλον λίπετ'), will himself be left behind.

In one further detail of equine behavior, the introduction to the chariot-race underlines the tragic shift that has taken place since Book 2. It forms both a minor ring-composition and a stark refusal of the consolation that such a closure device might possibly imply. When the mares of Eumelus were ranked next to Achilles' horses, the latter were said to be standing at

³³ The other examples are 5.366 and 788, 8.45, 10.530, 11.281 and 519, 16.149, 22.400, 23.506.

pasture, grazing on clover and parsley, unemployed because their master lay idle (2.775–77). The Myrmidons, meanwhile, moved about aimlessly, but missed their leader (2.778: ἀρχὸν ἀρρήφιλον ποθέοντες/φοίτων ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα). At 23.283, Achilles' horses are once more immobile, but this time it is because they themselves are grieving for the missing Patroclus (τὸν τῷ γ' ἑσταότες πενθείετον). Instead of returning for a final victory-lap where their immortal powers would be impossible to ignore, Xanthus and Balius are still out of action, foreshadowing the eventual loss that the *Iliad* itself awaits but will never depict.

Part of the brilliance of the race narrative in Book 23 is the poet's cinematic approach. Instead of the bird's-eye wide-angle omniscience of the sort that an off-track spectator typically gets from video feeds, in which all horses and riders are kept in constant view and we can see relative standings throughout the event, the *Iliad* narrator zooms in on segments, creating a montage of three different close encounters. First, we are made to focus on the race between Diomedes and Eumelus (23.375–400). This turns out to be a vengeful duel between their respective patrons, Apollo and Athena, the latter enabling Diomedes to take the lead by smashing his opponent's chariot, after the former god tried to snatch away Diomedes' whip.³⁴ Next, the camera moves to a second pairing, Menelaus pursued by Antilochus (23.401–46), which features the reckless passing maneuver that will embroil the two men in post-race disputes. Finally, the focus moves to a spectator-duel: Idomeneus and Oilean Ajax argue about which team is in the lead (23.450–98). This last clash offers something of a meta-*agôn*, as it represents a dispute *about* a dispute, a verbal wrangling concerning the athletic action on the race-course. As with the previous two close encounters (the gods in opposition; the post-race opposition of Antilochus and Menelaus), this, too, contains its own further secondary contest—a proposed wager between the principals, the outcome to be determined (ominously, in terms of the *Iliad*'s earlier action) by Agamemnon (23.485–87). Only the intervention of Achilles, who urges the quarreling heroes to await the results, prevents an escalation of anger.

Now one might object that the Homeric poet only “knows” one way to depict conflict: through the description of individual clashes. That is why, the argument might run, we see in the chariot-race such a conspicuous dyadic narrative technique, the whole story of five competing chariots told in the

³⁴ On the motivations for divine intervention and the thematic connections with the rest of the poem, see Rousseau 2010, 48–54.

form of three competing pairs, only two of which are actually racing (while Meriones is largely ignored). Yet there are enough instances in the poem of the skilled depiction of mass movements of men and horses that we need not credit such limiting critiques.³⁵ Instead, the dyadic focus in the chariot-race can be seen as yet another way in which the race englobes the rest of the *Iliad*. The homology between racing and running for one's life has already been established imagistically by the time of Book 23, as we have seen; now the resemblance is heavily underlined by the poetic camera-technique usually employed for mortal one-on-one combats.

The Last Lap

If the chariot-race is an artful totalizing summation of the themes and techniques of the *Iliad* itself, counter-balancing in its tight space near the poem's *telos* the global vision of the Catalogue of Ships, we can extend the homology to include the protagonist of the poem and the poet.³⁶ For the poet, composition-in-performance is itself a race against time—both the synchronic time ticking away as he persuades audiences on any given occasion to keep listening, and the diachronic stretch of time that the poem must endure in order to maintain heroic *kleos* for more than one generation. Homeric epic, in its own terms, is already winning the diachronic contest: its objects of praise are still alive in verse centuries after their deaths. In its own terms, as well, the *Iliad* presents those heroic figures as having desired the very fame through song that keeps their memory alive.³⁷ Such concentration on its own semi-divine powers of long-term commemoration must have functioned to keep audiences enthralled through the *thelxis* of a powerful poem-in-performance: the Muse-directed medium carried with it the guarantee of ancient tradition, miraculously surviving through the generations and conveying Nestorian authority about the past.³⁸

³⁵ E.g., the opening of Book 3: the return of Myrmidons to war in Book 19.

³⁶ For other indicators of the symbiosis between poet and hero, see Martin 1989, and for comparative evidence of the same phenomenon, see Reynolds 1995.

³⁷ The most enlightening and thorough analysis of memory in the poem is in Bouvier 2002.

³⁸ On the central importance of Nestor to the Homeric epics, especially prominent through the Book 23 race, see Frame 2009, 131–72 and *passim*.

From the internal point-of-view, Achilles the hero is also Achilles the athlete, but paradoxically, one who does not finally compete.³⁹ When we see him in Book 23, it is not long before he himself will become, like his companion Patroclus, the dead hero celebrated by games, rather than the competitor. His mother Thetis will, at his funeral, lay out god-given prizes for the winners (*Odyssey* 24.85–90). In the underworld, he will be reminded of other funeral games he had attended while alive (*Odyssey* 24.87–89), just as Nestor recalls the athletic events that he as a younger man won and lost (*Iliad* 23.630–45). In this way, epic constructs the funereal athletic event as a site for the proper recognition of honor (*timê*, 23.649) and shared memories (23.619, 648)—in other words, as an analogue for epic itself.⁴⁰ If epic, heroic funerals, and the accompanying athletic events alike award and preserve honor and glory (*kleos esthlon*, *Odyssey* 24.94), we should not be surprised to hear in the words of Achilles, as he instructs his companions about his own funeral arrangements, just before he prepares the chariot-race, a metaphor (hitherto, it would seem, unremarked) that metamorphosizes his own death into the ultimate victory (*Iliad* 23.245–48).⁴¹

τύμβον δ' οὐ μάλα πολλὸν ἐγὼ πονέεσθαι ἄνωγα,
ἀλλ' ἐπεικέα τοῖον ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἀχαιοὶ
εὐρύν θ' ὑψηλὸν τε τιθήμεναι, οἳ κεν ἐμεῖο
δεύτεροι ἐν νήεσσι πολυκλήϊσι λίπησθε.

“And I would have you build a grave mound which is not very great but such as will be fitting, for now; afterward, the Achaians can make it broad and high—such of you Achaians as may be *left* to survive me here by the benched ships, *after I am gone*.”

The words “left ... after me” may seem to lack any figurative reference. Yet, in the context of the upcoming race, they turn out to be technically precise and remarkably vivid. Compare for λίπησθε in 23.248 the language used by Antilochus as he urges on his team of horses at 23.407:

³⁹ On the association of hero and athlete, see Nagy 1990, 136–45 and 199–214.

⁴⁰ Cf. Rousseau 2010, 45 n. 81. On hero-tombs used for turning-points in the races at historical Panhellenic games, see Nagy 1990, 210 with further bibliography.

⁴¹ Richardson 1993, 199 notes merely that *deuteros* with a genitive appears only here in epic. Significantly the usage in Herodotus 1.23 (cited by Richardson and Leaf 1900 ad loc.) applies to the ranking of a performer in terms of his excellence: Arion, the citharode, second to none (ἐόντα καθαρόδον τῶν τότε ἐόντων οὐδενὸς δεύτερον). I would claim the same sense at work in *Iliad* 23.248.

ἵππους δ' Ἀτρεΐδαο κιχάνετε, μὴ δὲ λίπησθον,

“But make your burst to catch the horses of the son of Atreus
nor let them leave you behind.”

And compare for δεύτεροι in the same line (23.248) the reference to horses as coming in “second” at 23.497–98

... τότε δὲ γνώσεσθε ἕκαστος
ἵππους Ἀργείων, οἳ δεύτεροι οἷ τε πάροιθεν.

“Then you each can see for himself, and learn which
of the Argives’ horses have run first and which have *run second*.”

In other words, to capture the full force of Achilles’ metaphor at *Iliad* 23.248 we must translate “such of you Achaeans as will *come in second to me* [in the race to death and immortality].” Achilles is using the terminology of the track. From the point of view of both poet and hero, all his Achaean comrades—by virtue of being *not* the “best of the Achaeans”—rank second, like so many chariot-teams who have not yet crossed the finish-line behind him.⁴² In order to win the war at Troy, they must wait—the ultimate Iliadic anticipation, beyond the poem’s narration—for the hero Achilles to “win” by dying. Ironically, the first shall be last: it is Achilles the dearly departed who will be left behind by his departing friends, localized permanently on the landscape of the Troad, while the Achaeans with their ships (cf. 23.248 ἐν νήεσσι πολυκλήϊσι) will be left mobile, to find (most of them) their ways home.

⁴² The centrality of the theme is traced brilliantly in Nagy 1999, esp. 26–41. I would note that this image of Achilles as metaphorical chariot-racer fits nicely with that of Achilles as *apobatês* as explicated by Nagy 2010, 170–77. I would also venture that, like the apobatic Achilles, the “racing” Achilles of *Iliad* 23.245–48 would have most resonance for audiences at the Panathenaea, in which both four-horse and two-horse chariot-races (alongside the rhapsodic contests performing Homeric epic) were major events: see Neils, 1992, 91–93.

DISTANT LANDMARKS

HOMER AND HESIOD¹

The *Argonautica* demands to be read as a latter-day Homeric epic that constantly draws attention to un-Homeric and para-Homeric themes and techniques. Recreating the aesthetic tastes of Apollonius and his audience means that we must explore a more complex hermeneutic negotiation than the static notions of “imitation” or “playfulness,” “intertextuality” or *emulatio* can encompass.² Instead, it may help to imagine the poem dynamically miming what it celebrates—a voyage, a vessel, and a crew of characters. It forges through a sea of traditions, deftly sailing between the clashing rocks of Homer and Hesiod, sighting the smaller (at least to us) islands like Antimachus and the Cyclic epics, skirting the shores of drama and lyric, even stopping off at exotic prose genres. From every such landfall this *Argo*-like poem takes on a self-conscious awareness of its own simultaneous belatedness and innovation.

Consequently, the most important overarching technique in the poem is double vision: that is, the reader’s experience is enriched through being made constantly to observe similarities and contrasts, especially, although far from exclusively, with Homeric and Hesiodic verse.³ Or, to continue the nautical metaphor: every landmark—speech expression, descriptive phrase, even prepositional use—brings into view yet another, more distant, enabling the reader to get a sense of relative depth and distance, along the moving

¹ This essay is previously unpublished.

² Within the ever-accumulating work on intertextuality in Classical literature, I have made most use of these key volumes that articulate and advance theory: Barchiesi 1984; Conte 1991; Bonanno 1990; Hinds 1998; Thomas 1999; Edmunds 2001; and Tsagalis 2008.

³ Stephens 2003 examines a different and equally fertile sort of double vision involving Greek literary traditions and Egyptian realities in the Hellenistic period. Combining these perspectives, perhaps we should speak of Apollonian “vision squared.”

line of the literary horizon. The total effect of such calibrations makes one sense just how new the *Argonautica* is. This novelty can be analyzed in terms of two essential categories: the crafting of a particular narrative *voice*, and the manipulation of *expectation* by way of major and minor narrative components.

Before examining in brief many of the landmark types that went into this creation, as a sort of mariner's guide to the epic, we must first pause to recollect how wide the literary prospect stretched for Apollonius and his audience, lest we rush into mapping limited one-to-one correspondences between the poem and the full-scale archaic compositions that happen to survive to our era. The possibility must remain open that any apparent imitation or allusion was intended to evoke not primarily our *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, or *Theogony*, or *Homeric Hymns*, but some other significant poetic moment or monument now vanished. Apart from the works now attributed to Homer and Hesiod at least three sorts of hexameter poetic materials were accessible to Apollonius. First, there existed epics on the Theban saga, including the stories of Oedipus and his descendants, on Heracles, and on the heroic generation of Argos, Corinth, northwestern Greece, and the Peloponnese. Some of these were later labeled "Cyclic" epics, a title whose exact meaning and valence for later generations of Greek authors has been disputed.⁴ Second, there existed a number of poetic treatments of the Argonaut story. Some of these, whether oral traditions in poetry or (less likely) written accounts, were already available to audiences before the composition of the Homeric *Odyssey*, judging by the reference at *Odyssey* 12.70 to "the Argo, of interest to all" (*Argô pasi melousa*).⁵ The category of Argonaut tales overlaps somewhat with the "Cyclic" tales, since individual crew members for the expedition led by Jason featured as protagonists in further adventure stories.⁶ As far as attested hexameter poetry goes, we have evidence that "Argonautic" material existed in the *Corinthiaca* of Eumelus (mid-sixth century BCE); the *Carmen Naupactium* (fr. 3–9 West); and a 6500-line epic attributed to the legendary Cretan sage Epimenides.⁷ Third, there existed epics from the

⁴ For texts, see West 2003b. On the importance of "Cyclic" poems, see Hunter 2008, 144–46; Huxley 1969, 39–50, 165–72; Burgess 2001; Fantuzzi 1988, 7; and Sistakou 2007. For treatment of the Cycle in Alexandria, see Severyns 1928, esp. 254–59 (on *Argonautica* 4.866–79).

⁵ See Scherer 2006, 12–22.

⁶ The *Carmen Naupactium* (seventh century BCE?) seems to have been of this sort, dealing extensively with genealogical but also Argonautic traditions. See Matthews 1977; Huxley 1969, 69–75; and Scherer 2006, 19–20.

⁷ On these, see West 2005, 40–41.

classical period and later that were themselves highly imitative of archaic poems. The works of Antimachus of Colophon (fl. 400 BCE) are a prime example.⁸ Pisander and Panyassis, Choerilus of Samos, Philitas of Cos, and Simias of Rhodes also wrote hexameters—only fragments survive—that could have been imitated by Apollonius.⁹ Nor should we forget that even the authoritative names “Homer” and “Hesiod” signified quite different accumulations of poetry in the Hellenistic period: the former was often taken as author of the comic poem *Margites* (even by Aristotle: *Poetics* 1448b28–38) and of various heroic epics such as the *Sack of Oichalia*, *Thebaid*, and *Epigoni*, as well as poems of the Trojan cycle, while the latter became a cover term for disparate hexameter poetic traditions ranging from mantic poetry to didactic.¹⁰ A consolation for modern interpreters faced with so much missing material is that Hellenistic poets themselves at least appear to have privileged Homer and Hesiod as their major influences, as is made clear by well-known programmatic statements from Theocritus (*Idylls* 16.20):

“τίς δέ κεν ἄλλου ἀκούσαι; ἄλις πάντεσσιν Ὅμηρος.
οὗτος ἀοιδῶν λῶστος, ὃς ἐξ ἐμεῦ οὔσεται οὐδέν.”

“Who would wish to listen to anyone else? Homer’s enough for everyone; The best poet is the one who will get nothing from me.” [trans. Hopkinson 2015]

and Callimachus (*Epigrams* 29 = *Palatine Anthology* 9.507):

Ἡσιόδου τό τ’ ἄεισμα καὶ ὁ τρόπος οὐ τὸν ἀοιδῶν
ἔσχατον, ἀλλ’ ὀκνέω μὴ τὸ μελιχρότατον
τῶν ἐπέων ὁ Σολεὺς ἀπεμάξατο. χαίρετε, λεπτὰ
ῥήσιες, Ἀρήτου σύμβολον ἀγρυπνίης.

The rhythm and the manner are Hesiod’s. He of Soli took as a model not the worst of poets, but, I am afraid, the most honeyed of his verses. Hail! delicate phrases, the monument of Aratus’ sleepless nights. [trans. Paton 1917]

Even in the scanty remains of the other hexameter works that we do possess, it is possible to find unusual phrases or word-forms resembling those

⁸ Scherer 2006, 34–35; Matthews 1996.

⁹ On Philitas, e.g., see Spanoudakis 2002. The rare word ὄμπιον appeared in his poetry and philological work: see Dettori 2000, 113–24; Spanoudakis 2002, 142–44; Apollonius employs it at *Argonautica* 4.989.

¹⁰ Pfeiffer 1968, 43–44; Lamberton 1988b, 134–44.

in Apollonius, making it probable that the author of the *Argonautica* cast his net very wide. It is *a priori* likely that he deployed phrases from the pre-existing Argonaut stories—either for reminiscences or for stark contrasts—as much as he did Homeric or Hesiodic material, and here the quite learned scholia to Apollonius are helpful in pointing out the poet's innovations or borrowings at the level of individual words, characters, motifs, or other plot elements. Several examples will be cited under the appropriate headings below.

To begin at the most elementary poetic level: *metrical practice* would seem to be the least likely medium for distinguishing Apollonius's work, as the sea of dactylic hexameter—from Homeric poems through to Nonnus—at first sight looks uniform. Exhaustive metrical studies beginning with early nineteenth-century critics, from Gottfried Hermann on, have shown how uncannily consistent the artificial art-language of the poetic hexameter has remained, even while the Greek language itself changed drastically from tonal to stress-accented.¹¹ Nevertheless, we can detect small differences between archaic and Hellenistic usage, and furthermore, between Apollonius and contemporaries, that point to more significant ways in which the verses of the *Argonautica* create a different flow and sound.

If one takes account of the distribution of spondees vs. dactyls in the five feet of the hexameter where dactyls are allowed (i.e., all but the last foot), *Argonautica* lines, with an average of 3.85 dactyls per verse, are more rapid than Homeric (average 3.7). A similar rapidity can be detected in the relative numbers of lines containing three spondees (7.95% *Iliad* vs. 4.52% *Argonautica*) and, less commonly, four spondees (0.58% *Iliad* vs. 0.12% *Argonautica*). There is also a significant difference in the localization of spondaic feet within poetic lines: Homeric practice allows more in the fourth foot (22.8% of the total number of spondees, contrasted with 15% in Apollonius), while Apollonius favors *versus spondaici* (i.e., verses with fifth-foot spondees): 7.6% of his spondees are thus located vs. 3.8% in Homer.¹²

¹¹ O'Neill 1942 provides a good review of earlier studies. A thorough analysis of metrical habits from Homer through Tzetzes in twelfth-century Byzantium is Rzach 1882. Wifstrand 1933 shows how metrical habits of Callimachus were retained even by Nonnus, six centuries later, with some adjustments made for linguistic changes. Mooney 1912, 411–28 surveys the major metrical and prosodic peculiarities in the poem.

¹² Figures from Sicking 1993, 72–74. Callimachean hexameters average 3.91 dactyls, have three spondees in 3.53% of lines, place 17.7% of the total number of spondees in the fourth foot of the line and 6.3% in the fifth foot. By the last measure, Apollonius thus stands out even among Hellenistic contemporaries. At the same time, he sounds more Homeric than Callimachean by neglecting the niceties of preserving third-foot caesura and bucolic diaeresis when there exists a diaeresis after the

While it is risky to extrapolate a poetic ethos from stylometrics, it is remarkable that a poem so bound thematically to movement over the sea might have itself moved more quickly in recitation, and when it did slow down its verses with spondaic sequences, was more likely to do so toward the close.

A quirk possibly related to this notable fondness for *spondaici* is Apollonius's unusual deployment of certain metrical word-shapes. From the 1000-line samples of archaic and post-Classical hexameters analyzed by Eugene O'Neill, Jr., it emerges that the *Argonautica* has the highest number of words (294) with the shape of a choriamb ($\bar{\text{—}} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$), the most (104 words) shaped as an adonic ($\bar{\text{—}} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$), and the most words of two related shapes: $\text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$ (63 in Apollonius as opposed to 31 in the *Iliad* sample) and $\text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$ (30, contrasted with once in the *Iliad* sample). These two latter-most metrical word-types are functional variants of the same underlying metrical segment, that which occupies the slot in the hexameter after the “trochaic” caesura (the word-break after the first short of the third foot) and leaves a three-syllable space at the end of the line.¹³ Of course, it is implausible that either the archaic or Hellenistic poets worked consciously at localizing certain shapes within the line: instead, bare abstract statistics like these reflect poetic choices made at the level of formula and phrasing, which in turn are mostly determined by the shaping of discourse over a run of several lines (or “paragraphs,” if we think in terms of topic and content). Yet statistics, when they show such wide variations across authors, potentially point us to significant higher-level stylistic devices. In the case of Apollonius, the device in question is most likely his frequent four-word lines. Consider the following lines near the start of the Catalogue of Argonauts, which cap the mention of the first and most significant recruit, Orpheus (1.32–34):

Ὀρφέα μὲν δὴ τοῖον ἑὼν ἐπαρωγὸν ἀέθλων

— — — — —

Αἰσονίδης Χείρωνος ἐφημοσύνησι πιθήσας

third foot (“Bulloch’s Law”); and in his more frequent violations of “Meyer’s Law” regarding word-end in the second foot (0.9% of lines vs. 0.06% in Callimachus); see Bulloch 1970 and Magnelli 1995.

¹³ O’Neill 1942, 147–49. Hagel 2004 updates O’Neill’s tables using full-text data, but his more precise breakdown of the results in terms of “appositive groups” and surrounding metrical environments is somewhat more cumbersome for stylistic analysis. If we take as a control one shape listed by Hagel ($\bar{\text{—}} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$), it appears that Apollonius uses it 43 times as contrasted with 85 times in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined, or, proportionately to the size of the corpora, once every 135 lines vs. once every 325 Homeric lines.

- ~ ~ - x

δέξατο, Πιερίῃ Βιστωνίδι κοιρανέοντα

Line 33 contains the metrical word-type that, as we have seen, is much more frequent in Apollonius than in Homer (~ - ~ ~ ~ ~), in the midst of a four-word hexameter. The following line (1.34) is also formed of only four words and features another frequent metrical type in Apollonius, a single word filling the adonic segment (after the bucolic diairesis, the word-break between the fourth and fifth feet). Even though the lines are mostly dactylic, their construction lends a stately solidity and closure appropriate for the narrative moment. Line 33 further echoes another four-word line, from the proem, featuring the same diction and theme, obedience to the command of another (1.3):

Ἀρχόμενος σέο Φοῖβε παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν
μνήσομαι οἱ Πόντοιο κατὰ στόμα καὶ διὰ πέτρας
Κυανέας βασιλῆος ἐφημοσύνη Πελῖας
χρύσειον μετὰ κῶας ἐύζυγον ἤλασαν Ἀργώ.

Beginning with you, Phoebus, I shall recall the famous deeds of
men born long ago, who, at the command of King Pelias, sailed
the well-benched Argo through the mouth of the Black Sea and
between the Cyanean rocks to fetch the golden fleece.¹⁴

Meanwhile, between lines 3 and 33 comes a couplet with another heavy four-word hexameter, describing the instructional role of Athena in crafting the Argonauts' ship (1.19):

Νῆα μὲν οὖν οἱ πρόσθεν ἔτι κλείουσιν ᾠοιοῖ
Ἄργον Ἀθηναίης καμέειν ὑποθημοσύνησι

As for the ship, the songs of former bards still tell how Argus
built it according to Athena's instructions.

Thus, a series of metrically similar lines swiftly highlights the major figures directing the expedition. Such patterning is hardly accidental.¹⁵

¹⁴ All translations of Apollonius are from Race 2009.

¹⁵ Two more four-word hexameters occur in the biography of Orpheus: 1.24, 31. Further clustering of four-word lines occurs in Book 2, for example (list not exhaustive): 3–4; 72, 80, 100, 129, 170, 224; 626, 667, 677, 700, 706, 758; 968, 988, 1060; 1249. According to Bassett 1919, the *versus tetracolos* occurs in 200 verses of the *Argonautica* (once per 29 lines) as contrasted with 431 verses of Homer (once every 64 lines).

Aside from their utility in drawing attention to poetic content at key points, the frequent four-word verses provide Apollonius with a more archaic architecture, like Cyclopean walls of massive stone. It is significant, as well, as Hermann Fränkel observed, that such lines most clearly articulate the four major segments of the Greek hexameter.¹⁶ Bearing in mind this distillation of essential metrical structure, it is worth observing that the greatest frequency of such *tetracolos* verses occurs in the collection of Orphic Hymns (first–third centuries CE).¹⁷ The hymnic aggregation of praise adjectives produces such lines as these from the Orphic *Hymn to Hecate* (4–5):

Περσεΐαν, φιλέρημον, ἀγαλλομένην ἐλάφοισι,
νυκτερίαν, σκυλακίτιν, ἀμαιμάκετον βασίλειαν.

Daughter of Perses, haunting deserted places, delighting in deer,
nocturnal, dog-loving, monstrous queen. [trans. Athanassakis and
Wolkow 2013]

We shall return to this stylistic device at the conclusion of the chapter when we attempt to identify more closely the narrative voice behind the poem.

Tightly bound to the meter of the epics is *diction*. Since the path-breaking studies by Milman Parry, the “formula”—although it eludes exact definition—has been increasingly recognized as an essential component of Homeric artistry, capable of bearing “immanent” meaning, so that the occurrence of even a few words triggers reminiscence of entire narrative scenes, situations, and plot-outcomes.¹⁸ One sort of familiarity, on which such recollection depends, is established by repetition of phrases, whether at the level of noun plus epithet (“cloud-gathering Zeus”) or more loosely connected “flexible” formulae, where nouns and adjectives regularly co-occur but are not necessarily contiguous.¹⁹ For the latter type, one gets the sense from the frequent appearance of common-noun-and-epithet pairings that the *Argonautica* is “formulaic” at this level, but closer examination shows how novel the poet’s combinations actually are. A test sample of

¹⁶ Fränkel 1968, 4, 10; his remarks come in an expanded discussion of his widely followed earlier analysis (1926) of hexametric cola.

¹⁷ Bassett 1919, 230 observes that one out of eight hymn verses is of this type.

¹⁸ On formulas in Apollonius, see the basic study by Fantuzzi 1988 updated and expanded in Fantuzzi 2008. For an overview of Parry’s work and the concept of “immanent” meaning, see J. M. Foley 1988 and 1991.

¹⁹ On which see Hainsworth 1968.

the first fifty lines of Book 2, for instance, shows fourteen common nouns with adjectives, only two of which are attested in Homer, Hesiod, or the Homeric *Hymns* (*Argonautica* 2.18 κροατεροῖ ... ἀνάγκη, cf. *Iliad* 6.458; and 2.32 δίπτυχα λώπην, cf. *Odyssey* 13.224). A third pair (2.40–41 οὐρανίῳ ... ἀστέρι) echoes a frequent Homeric formula (*ouranos asteroeis*, *Iliad* 5.769 etc.) but reverses the roles of adjective and noun.

As for the former phrase-type, Apollonius clearly does not employ a dictional system marked by the oral-traditional characteristics of economy and extension, providing for every major figure in each metrical *sedes* one and only one epithet. In fact, Parry chose Apollonius to illustrate exactly this difference between Homeric and later written hexameters.²⁰ It is generally acknowledged that such systems evolved for the sake of rapid spontaneous composition in performance (of a type subsequently observed in fieldwork). A more nuanced contrast between archaic and Apollonian usage would see the latter as *partially* formulaic, not because the *Argonautica* was orally composed but because the poet desired a certain patina—“Homeric” at the same time as it is obviously not. Whereas Homeric epic is filled with repetitions, those in the *Argonautica* stand out for their scarcity.²¹ The scores of formulaic systems within Homeric poetry produce for its audiences a type of predictability that can be summoned—and even violated—to produce special effects. The *intratextual* relationships within Homeric epics are themselves already quite complex, given the working of “traditional referentiality” (to use J. M. Foley’s term).²² Reading Apollonius, then, adds another dimension, the *intertextual*, to an already dense configuration of meanings in his source texts.

Since the crew of the Argo flourished a generation before the heroes of the Trojan War, we would not expect to find the Homeric *epithet system* transferred as a whole to them; these are different characters with names of differing metrical shapes, in a different plot. Teasingly, the two times that the future hero Achilles is named in the *Argonautica*, he is given resonant Iliadic epithets: “son of Peleus” (*Argonautica* 1.558 Πηλεΐδην Ἀχιλλῆα; cf. *Iliad* 23.542 and frequently elsewhere, usually in this *sedes*), at the moment when the toddler watches from a hillside the departing ship of his Argonaut father;

²⁰ Parry 1971, 18–30, 264–75.

²¹ Fantuzzi 1988, 61–77 meticulously analyzes the most formulaic of lines—speech-introductions—in terms of their variation from Homeric models.

²² J. M. Foley 1991. For magisterial analysis of intra- and inter-textual formulaic connections see Muellner 1996.

and “glorious” (4.868 Ἀχιλλῆος ἀγαυοῦ; cf. *Iliad* 17.557) in a flashback to the near-immortalization of the infant Achilles by his mother Thetis (which Peleus aborted). Apollonius thereby forecasts and confirms the Homeric glories of the next generation. Since the gods, however, remain the same through all generations, in describing them Apollonius might have chosen to play up continuity by conspicuously using Homeric epithets. Instead, he draws on this system only partially, and—characteristically—in order to introduce subtle variations. A detailed accounting remains to be done of the later poet’s re-purposing of the entire divine-epithet system. But even a preliminary analysis of two divinities illustrates the technique in operation.

Homeric epic has twenty-three different epithets that are applied exclusively to Zeus. Of these, Apollonius uses only one, the patronymic *Kronidēs* “Son of Cronus.” What might be thought the blandest way to designate the father of the gods is, in fact, a means of emphasizing the theogonic past, keeping the audience in mind of the divine struggle for succession (a theme embedded also in the poem’s allusions to Prometheus). As a result of this epithetic narrowing, however, the impressive Homeric picture of an authoritative sky-god Zeus who is cloud gatherer, aegis-bearer, clever-deviser, and wide-voiced is abandoned; in the *Argonautica*, Zeus is “Olympian” precisely once, at 4.95 (vs. twenty-eight times in Homer).

Closer analysis of how the poet does employ his chosen Homeric epithet for Zeus reveals some patterned variations on the older epics. For example, Apollonius uses the dative form of the epithet twice:

Argonautica 2.524:

ιέρα τ' εὖ ἔρρεξεν ἐν οὐρεσιν ἀστέρι κείνῳ
 Σειδίῳ αὐτῷ τε Κρονίδῃ Διί. τοῖο ἔκητι
 γαῖαν ἐπιψύχουσιν ἐτήσιοι ἐκ Διὸς αὔραι

and [he] duly performed sacrifices on the mountains to that star
 Sirius and *to Zeus himself, son of Cronus*. And for this reason the
 Etesian winds sent by Zeus cool the land ...

Argonautica 2.1147:

τὸν μὲν ἔπειτ' ἔρρεξεν ἑῆς ὑποθημοσύνησιν
 Φυξίῳ ἐκ πάντων Κρονίδῃ Διί· καί μιν ἔδεκτο
 Αἰήτης μέγῳ, κούρην τέ οἱ ἐγγυάλισεν

That ram, by its own instructions, he afterwards sacrificed *to*
Cronus' son Zeus, the God of Fugitives, above all other gods. And

Aeetes received him into his home and betrothed his daughter
to him

Intratextually, this is constructed to sound “formulaic,” inasmuch as the phrase repeats exactly within the space of one book, in the same metrical slot (between the penthemimeral caesura and bucolic diaresis). But *intertextually*, the Apollonian “formula” is subtly unlike its Homeric predecessor: in the three passages where the older epics use the dative, once it is coupled with the name *Dīi* (as in Apollonius), but in a verse that switches the order of noun and epithet and uses a different metrical *sedes*:

Iliad 9.172:

ὄφρα Διὶ Κρονίδῃ ἀρησόμεθ', αἵ κ' ἐλέησῃ.

so we may pray to *Zeus, son of Cronus*, if he will have pity.²³

The other two times, the metrical positioning of the dative *Kronidēi* is the same as in Apollonius, but the epithet accompanies a line-initial *Zēni* (a morphologically “newer” dative of the name Zeus) and a further epithet “of the dark cloud”:

Odyssey 9.552 (=13.25):

Ζηνὶ κελαϊνεφέϊ Κρονίδῃ, ὃς πᾶσιν ἀνάσσει.

to *Zeus of the dark clouds son of Cronus*.

Diachronically, we could describe this method of Apollonius as “splitting” the older Homeric phrases and re-assembling the pieces in semi-Homeric manner. Yet it may be more interesting to imagine Apollonius synchronically, as a creative poet working with complete control within an established epic tradition, executing the same sort of formulaic innovation that occurs even *within* the Homeric corpus, as we saw in the examples just cited (morphological and metrical variants *Zēni* / *Dīi*; word-order variation). Homeric formulaic practice was itself not monophonic; or, put more paradoxically, Apollonius is most “Homeric” when choosing to be *para*-Homeric in such ways.²⁴

²³ Translations of the *Iliad* are from Lattimore 2011 unless otherwise noted.

²⁴ For more examples of the handling of Homeric formulae, see Fantuzzi 2008.

At times, Hellenistic cleverness turns even the level of formulaic diction into an occasion for erudite display. In another line employing the “son of Cronus” epithet (this time in the nominative case), Apollonius tells how Zeus gave the bronze giant Talos to be warder of Crete. The poet places the god’s patronymic next to the proper name of the recipient, Europa (*Argonautica* 4.1643):

Εὐρώπῃ Κρονίδης νήσου πόρεν ἔμμεναι οὖρον.

he had been given to Europa by Cronus’ son to be the island’s guardian.

Though probably not related in etymology, Eurôpa closely resembles in sound *euruopa*, “having a wide-sounding voice”—with twenty-three occurrences, one of the most frequent particularized epithets for Zeus in Homeric poetry. What is more, several Homeric lines juxtapose this epithet with his patronymic, e.g., *Iliad* 15.152 (cf. 1.498, 24.98):

εὔρον δ’ εὐρύοπα Κρονίδην ἀνὰ Γαργάρω ἄκρῳ

[they] found the wide-browed son of Cronus on the height of Gargaron.

In short, Apollonius while conspicuously omitting the epithet *euruopa* throughout his composition manages to smuggle in a close facsimile, in a *callida iunctura* that echoes Homeric phrasing. Like Argonauts glimpsing the slightest traces of Heracles, we see a ghost of the older poet in an unlikely place.

Both Zeus and Apollo several times bear distinctive epithets that never occur in Homer. Zeus is “of flight” (*Fuxios* 2.1147), “cleansing” (*Katharsios* 4.708), “kind to guests” (*Euxeinos* 2.378), and “overseeing” (*Epopsios* 2.1123), while Apollo is known as “of embarkation” (*Embasios* 1.359, 404), “prophetic” (*Manteios* 2.493), and “ship-saving” (*Nêosoos* 2.927) among other titles. Through this strategy, Apollonius binds the gods more closely to cult, on the one hand, and on the other to the lineaments of his own plot, which actualizes and gives aetologies for the titles in terms of the Argonauts’ varied encounters. This close relationship of epithets to religious ritual within the poem might offer a starting-place for further analysis regarding the generic affiliations of Apollonius’ diction. To take one example: the poet uses seventeen times the name *Phoibos* for Apollo, but, quite jarringly in comparison with Homer, only once as an epithet. By contrast, in the *Iliad*,

Odyssey, and Homeric *Hymns* taken together, Phoibos occurs eighty-one times; out of this number, it is paired with *Apollôn* sixty-one times, most often in the familiar line-end formula Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων (e.g., *Iliad* 1.43). It is significant that the single place in which Apollonius adheres to the usual Homeric pairing comes in the elaborate description of divinities depicted on Jason's cloak (*Argonautica* 1.759–60):

Ἐν καὶ Ἀπόλλων Φοῖβος οἰστεύων ἐτέτυκτο,
βούπαις, οὔπω πολλός, ἔην ἐρύοντα καλύπτρης

And on it was wrought Phoebus Apollo as a mighty youth, not
yet fully grown, shooting [at enormous Tityus], who was boldly
pulling Apollo's mother by her veil.

In other words, the formal, formulaic style of conjoined Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων, appearing in a reversed word-order also found formulaically in Homer (*Iliad* 16.700, 20.68, 21.515), highlights the god's appearance in the most highly-crafted artistic creation within the *Argonautica*, as if acknowledging the traditional "art-language" use of the epithet in older epic (even at the precise moment the *younger* Apollo οὔπω πολλός is being described). What does it signify, meanwhile, that Apollonius in the other sixteen instances of *Phoibos* uses it without the god's proper name? Here, too, older hexameter poetry provides clues. The bare *Phoibos* occurs twenty times in Homer and the *Hymns*; thirteen of these are vocatives and more than half (seven) of that number come from the *Hymns*. In other words, in Apollonius we can expect the repeated use of *Phoibos* (alone) to create the sound of sacral language—fittingly in a poem so concerned with ritual establishments.²⁵

Just as one cannot disentangle metrical factors from dictional, so these cannot be separated entirely from linguistic changes, prompting further questions of dialect, archaisms, and by-forms. On the level of *morphology and syntax*, we can find interesting differences that make Apollonius sound less archaic. To appreciate these fully, we have to highlight again the general principle that, as a whole, the background of his verse does sound almost uncannily Homeric and/or Hesiodic. In general linguistic usage, he copies the older epics as closely as possible.²⁶ Uncontracted forms, for example, appear

²⁵ This also fits with evidence for the epithet of Zeus examined above: the uncontracted genitive *Kronidao* (*Argonautica* 2.1211, 4.753, 4.520) occurs nowhere in Homeric epic, but is in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (408) and in the opening invocation to the Muses at Antimachus fr. 1.1 Wyss, on which see Matthews 1996, 80.

²⁶ See examples in Rzach 1878, 8–30; La Roche 1899.

alongside contracted—*aethlon* (1.15) and *athlôn* (1.1304) *hieron* (1.960) and *hiron* (4.1691), just as in Homer. He widely uses apocope of prepositions and preverbs, e.g., of *ana* in *Argonautica* 1.1061: ἄμ πεδίον Λειμώνιον (cf. *Iliad* 5.96); has old epic forms with initial *pt-* (*ptolin*, *ptoliethron*) or double *-pp-* (*hoppote*); uses uncontracted endings such as *-âo* for masculine genitive singular and *-aôn* for feminine genitive plural; employs dialect variants such as Aeolic *pisures* (1.671) alongside Ionic *tessares* (1.946); and Aeolic *ummi* along with Ionic *humin*; omits verb augments when metrically convenient; often resorts to epic infinitive endings in *-menai* and subjunctive third-person singular *-si*; and in general, only uses tense formations of particular verbs if they have already been attested in Homer or Hesiod.²⁷

The nearly pitch-perfect imitation even extends to frequent lengthening of an otherwise short syllable in places where a once existent digamma in a following word had combined with a second consonant. This feature marked archaic verse where the digamma sound (/w/) had been recently alive in poetic tradition (and was still spoken in many dialects other than Ionic and Attic). By the time of Apollonius the effect was a learned archaism. He gives the preposition *epi* a long second syllable before *d(w)eos* “fear” in such lines as 1.639:

~ -
ἄφθογγοι, τοῖόν σφιν ἐπὶ δέος ἦωρεῖτο

entirely in accord with what the linguistically correct treatment found in Homer (e.g., *Iliad* 1.515 οὐ τοι ἔπι δέος). Similarly, he lengthens *gar* “for” at 1.969 (and elsewhere) before *hoi* “to/for him,” which originally had the initial w- sound:

- -
μηλὰ θ' ὁμοῦ. δὴ γὰρ οἱ ἔην φάτις, εὗτ' ἄν ἴκωνται.

This is an exact imitation of Homeric phrases like *Iliad* 5.188: ἤδη γὰρ οἱ ἐφῆκα βέλος (“for I have shot my shaft already”).²⁸ As often, Apollonius is here following a tradition of archaizing, since already Panyassis in the fifth century used the same lengthening (fr. 14.6).²⁹

²⁷ Full listings and analyses in Rzach 1878.

²⁸ See further data in Rzach 1882.

²⁹ Noted by Rzach 1882, 372; on the Panyassis fragment, see Matthews 1974, 76–87. Archaizing lengthening in such phrases also permeates later Greek poetry, into the Byzantine period.

On the other hand, a fine-grained analysis discovers significant differences. There are enough new forms in his poetry, new extensions of old forms no longer understood, and new applications of familiar words, that an experienced reader of archaic poetry would have perceived a continual undertone of novelty. At the level of morphology, Apollonius uses, for example, in lieu of the regular Homeric *-oiato* the more familiar Classical third-plural present optative form in *-ointo* (only once in Homer, in the suspect line *Iliad* 1.344).³⁰ He freely extends the use of the middle voice—without apparent semantic difference—to many verbs that in Homer appeared only in the active, and uses the dative case with a greater number of verbs, and more often without prepositions.³¹ Apollonius often extrapolates from existing Homeric forms, creating futures (such as *damassei* 3.353) or presents (e.g., *ameiro*, 3.186) on the basis of (sometimes false) analogies derived from other verb stems.³² New noun forms are scattered throughout the poem, such as the word for “child” in *Argonautica* 1.276 (παῖν) and for ship 1.1358 (νηῦν) vs. inherited *paida* and *nêa*.³³ Paradoxically, at times the innovations of Apollonius seem intended to make his poetic texture look older, by over-developing formations that he apparently considered archaic. Thus, the widespread use of adverbs in *-dên* (e.g., 2.826 ἀγδην; 1.1017 ἀρπάγδην).³⁴ Putting prepositions after the nouns they modify (postposition) reflects archaic syntax, but Apollonius does this once for every nine occurrences of a preposition, whereas Homer was more restrained (once out of thirteen times).³⁵ Such a longing for archaic patina may explain the poet’s indiscriminate deployment of prepositional forms like *h(e)os* that are properly restricted to the third person in older epic usage: Apollonius, liking their antique ring, uses them for *all* persons (e.g., for first person in 3.99: ἀτεμβοίμην ἐοῖ αὐτῇ, “I would have only myself to blame”).³⁶ His fondness for adjectives in *-aleos* and

³⁰ See Boesch 1908, 12.

³¹ Boesch 1908, 18–21; on cases, Linsenbarth 1887, 48–56.

³² Marxer 1935, 8–13: the new *ameiro* is by analogy with *keiro*, the aorist of which (*kersai*) resembled an attested aorist (*amersai*).

³³ Marxer 1935, 22.

³⁴ Marxer 1935, 32.

³⁵ Haggett 1902, 71, who notes also (p. 36) the poet’s fondness for certain compound prepositions (*diek*, *parek*) used in un-Homeric ways.

³⁶ Marxer 1935, 61.

abstract nouns in *-sunê* also overextends distinctive but fleeting epic usages, although this may have resulted from imitating tragic poetic diction.³⁷

Emblematic of this schizoid approach are his infinitives. Apollonius copies archaic epic usage only half the time, the other half of these forms being variations, sometimes widely different, and often reflecting tragic or lyric poetic habit.³⁸ In a prominent passage, for instance, he uses *kleiô* to introduce an accusative and infinite construction (1.18–19):

Νῆα μὲν οὖν οἱ πρόσθεν ἔτι κλείουσιν ἄιοδοί
 Ἄργον Ἀθηναίης καμέειν ὑποθημοσύνησι·

As for the ship, the songs of former bards still tell how Argus
 built it according to Athena's instructions.

The verb existed in Homer, but the closest Homeric syntactical equivalent occurs with a slightly different verb, *aeidein* (*Odyssey* 8.516).³⁹ Other infinitive constructions imitate instances that occur only once in all Homeric poetry (e.g., the use of *mûtheomai* with infinitive at *Argonautica* 2.458–60; cf. *Iliad* 21.462). In short, the voice being represented through such syntactic choices is both deeply epic-sounding but also conspicuously speaks like other times and genres.

Appreciation of the ways in which Apollonius manipulated Homeric diction must recognize that he was refining a poetic habit begun at least a century earlier, as evidenced by the fragmentary extant works of Antimachus. A Homeric scholar, like Apollonius, this author of a *Thebais* in hexameters and of the long elegiac poem *Lyde* sought out rare words from archaic epic to lend the air of antiquity to his own verses.⁴⁰ To take one example: in all of Homer the word *kalauirops* ("herdsman's crook") occurs only once, near the end of the *Iliad*, in lines comparing a heroic iron-toss to the bucolic instrument thrown to separate cattle (23.845): ὅσσόν τις τ' ἔρριψε καλαύροπα βουκόλος ἀνήρ ("as far as an ox-herd can cast with his throwing stick"). The scholiast to the passage preserves a line in which Antimachus copied this *hapax legomenon*, in the same metrical position (schol. bT Erbse):

³⁷ Redondo 2000, 135–41.

³⁸ McLennan 1973, categorizing all occurrences, notes that epexegetic infinitives after adjectives in the *Argonautica* are almost always un-Homeric.

³⁹ See further on *kleiô* and related verbs Linsenbarth 1887, 24.

⁴⁰ For the activity of Antimachus as Homeric scholar, see Wyss 1936, fr. 131–48 and Matthews 1996, 373–403. For Apollonius' use of Antimachus, extending even to conjunction usage, see Matthews 1996, 88–91.

καὶ Ἀντίμαχος “πάντες δ’ ἐν χεῖρεσσι καλαύροπας οὐατοέσσας”

[fr. 91 Wyss = 64 Matthews]

Antimachus also [has] “and all in their hands throwing-sticks with handles”

Given this background, when Apollonius twice uses the word in his epic, again in the same *sedes* (2.33, 4.974), we imagine that he depends on a connoisseur audience knowing not just Homer but also the Homeric *imitators* of the intervening centuries. The absence of context in the Antimachus fragment prevents us from assessing what poetic overtones the double reminiscence might have carried.⁴¹ Perhaps significantly, Amycus, who throws down his olive-wood *kalaurops* in 2.33, is about to *lose* a boxing contest, while the Homeric occurrence appeared in an image celebrating athletic *success*. Whether this similarity is conscious or accidental, it illustrates one type of flashback recollection triggered by the subtle repetition of rare words.⁴²

Such compressed notes from the margins of medieval manuscripts also are a rich source of observations about the ways in which Apollonius varies Homeric usage. When the narrator at 1.919 declines to speak further of the Samothracian mysteries, τῶν μὲν ἔτ’ οὐ προτέρω μυθήσομαι, “of these things, however, I shall speak no further,” a scholiast explains that the adverb means “forwards” εἰς τοῦμπροσθεν, citing *Odyssey* 9.64, where it describes the movement of ships. But Apollonius, the commentator adds, has misapplied it to speech (καταχρηστικῶς ἐπὶ τοῦ λόγον: *Schol. Ap. Rhod.* p. 78.20 Wendel). Even more importantly, it is the scholia, both to Homer and Apollonius, that enable us to appreciate how the poet made use of the most exacting critical work on the text of Homer. To take one telling example: at *Argonautica* 1.1081, a line describes how “the other” Argonauts were sleeping:

ῥῆλλοι μὲν ῥα πάρος δεδμημένοι εὐνάζοντο

the rest of heroes, long since overcome by sleep, were slumbering.

The scholiast observes that because the combined form ῥῆλλοι (*hoi alloi*) is “newer Ionic,” the Homeric scholar Zenodotus was criticized for seeking to read this form in place of Ἄλλοι (i.e., without definite article *hoi*) at *Iliad* 2.1: Ἄλλοι μὲν ῥα θεοὶ τε καὶ ἄνδρες ἵπποκορυσταὶ / εἶδον παννύχιον,

⁴¹ A cattle-raid? Matthews 1996 tentatively ties the line to fr. 55 (= 49 Wyss). If this were the case, *Argonautica* 2.33 would then fuse athletic (Homeric) with martial (Antimachean) potential reminiscences, a typically Apollonian destabilizing allusion.

⁴² Kyriakou 1995 offers detailed readings of the effects of Homeric *hapax legomena* in Apollonius.

“now the rest of the gods, and men who were lords of chariots, slept night long.” The line in Apollonius is clearly modeled on the opening of Book 2 of the *Iliad*, a similar sleep-scene. But the choice of the “un-Homeric” ὅλλοι, insignificant as it might seem, was in context actually a bold statement, showing Apollonius conspicuously taking sides in what must have been ongoing text-critical debates. The poetic payoff from the form itself is unclear—did the poet mean to highlight the belatedness of his text, or was his (and Zenodotus’) choice based on the fact that by their time, normal Greek (as in classical Attic) used definite articles (a rarity in Homer)?⁴³ In another passage from the scholia (to *Argonautica* 2.1005), we learn that Apollonius uses an adjective describing “hard” land (στυφελήν) that Zenodotus in a monograph on unusual words (*Glossai*) had identified as coming from the archaic dialect of the Arcadian city Clitor.⁴⁴ It is clear that Apollonius was abreast of the latest work being carried out by scholars whom he knew personally in Alexandria or had read. Zenodotus, after all, preceded him in the post of Librarian at Alexandria; Apollonius himself is said to have written a book “against Zenodotus,” as well as critical works on Archilochus and Hesiod.⁴⁵

The extent to which the poet’s composition was permeated with references not just to Homeric poetry, but to the specific scholarly works thereon has been increasingly recognized.⁴⁶ This can occur at several levels of artistry. Individual rare words, as we have seen, can signal to audiences a fruitful textual relation with archaic epic. Apollonius not only uses more than 100 words attested only once each in Homer (*hapax legomena*), but also drops into his poem—precisely two times apiece—another 50 words attested only *twice* in the older poet (*dis legomena*), and, in another fit of ingenuity, employs *once* in his own poem yet another 157 words that Homer used just *twice*.⁴⁷ If nothing else, the poet displays to his contemporaries admirable counting

⁴³ See *schol. Ap. Rhod.* p. 95.20 Wendel. Cf. *schol. Iliad* 2.1 (A): ὅλλοι: ὅτι Ζηνόδοτος γράφει “ὅλλοι,” which suggests further that Zenodotus acknowledged the psilotic nature of Ionic (loss of initial *h*-, so that *hoi* was pronounced /oi/), even as he sought to import the definite article into the Homeric text.

⁴⁴ Many more such dialect words might be detectable in Apollonius, had we more of the *Ataktōi Glossai* of Philitas (teacher of Zenodotus), on which see the editions of Dettori 2000, esp. 20–38 and Spanoudakis 2002, 347–400.

⁴⁵ Pfeiffer 1968, 144–48; on the fragments of *Pros Zenodoton*, see Mooney 1912, 50–51 and Rengakos 2008, 256–61.

⁴⁶ The leading analyst is Rengakos 1994, 2008.

⁴⁷ Rengakos 1994, 174 n. 31 and 2008, 252 n. 43.

skill. At a slightly higher level of scholarly comment, Apollonius employs a “lexicographic technique” with scores of more obscure Homeric words by using them in his own poem with varied significations, each of which represents a meaning assigned to the lexical item by one or another ancient critic.⁴⁸ Thus, to take just a single adjective, the exact meaning of Homeric *têlugetos*, as we can gather from the scholia, was disputed. Apollonius uses it in the course of one book to mean “born to a father in old age” (1.99), “beloved” (1.149), and “only-begotten” (1.719)—exactly the range of possible meanings discussed in antiquity.⁴⁹ This technique turns the *Argonautica* into “a kind of poetic dictionary of Homer.”⁵⁰ At yet another level, the arming of Aeetes (*Argonautica* 3.1225–34), with its sequence of breastplate-helmet-shield-spear, has been seen to parallel not the standard Homeric arming protocol (in which shield precedes helmet), but the revised version of *Iliad* 3.330–39 (Paris arming) attributed to the textual activity of Zenodotus.⁵¹ Finally, and most striking, it has long been acknowledged that the final line of the *Argonautica*, announcing the crew’s return (*Argonautica* 4.1781):

ἀσπασίως ἀκτὰς Παγασίδας εἰσαπέβητε

you gladly set foot on the shores of Pagasae

echoes the going to bed of Odysseus and Penelope (*Odyssey* 23.296):

ἀσπάσιοι λέκτροιο παλαιοῦ θεσμὸν ἵκοντο·

gladly they came to their old bed’s proper place.

While the latter does not conclude the *Odyssey* as we have it, the line was notoriously an object of critical discussion in Alexandria, with the scholia reporting that Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus (Homeric scholars flourishing later than Apollonius) considered it the end of the epic.⁵² Apollonius would seem to be in favor of such a romantic denouement for the

⁴⁸ Rengakos 1994, 175–78, crediting Livrea with the term.

⁴⁹ See Mooney 1912, 75; Rengakos 1994, 154; cf. on other examples Seaton 1890, 7–9. Zacco 1996 is a fine case-study.

⁵⁰ Rengakos 2008, 253.

⁵¹ Rengakos 2008, 259.

⁵² See Heubeck 1992, 342–45 on whether this reflects the state of the Homeric *Odyssey* in the early Hellenistic era and whether *telos* should mean “end” rather than “conclusion of the main action.” Apollonius could allude to more radical critical treatments known later but not approved by Aristophanes or Aristarchus. For evidence that the Peripatetic scholar Demetrius of Phalerum

earlier adventure poem. Given such exacting employment of Homeric scholarship on his part, an interpretive puzzle remains concerning the “voice” of the *Argonautica* narrator. To what extent does the generalized use of familiar Homeric diction and motifs harmonize with this fussy attention to epic *hapax legomena* and arcane (at least to us) allusions to text-critical or linguistic controversies in third-century Alexandria? Is there an intentional dissonance? Or should we attune ourselves to hear not one voice, but something more polyphonic—a naïve “Homeric” (or even more archaic) bardic-narrator in concert with a sophisticated, opinionated scholar-poet—Ossian ventriloquized by Nabokov?⁵³

This navigation of the vagaries of “voice” has bypassed thus far the conventional starting-point for most examinations of Apollonius’s intertextuality—the *episode*. Relations of specific scenes to Homeric precedents are often semi-transparent and have been extensively studied. More helpful might be a summary of the modes of this technique and how they interact, rather than an attempt to inventory resemblances.⁵⁴

First, episodes can be brought into suggestive relation by the recurrence of a single detail of description, plot, or character. As the *Argo* reaches Lemnos (*Argonautica* 1.601–10), the island is called “Sintian” (*Sintêida Lêmnon*, 608), offering a reminder to the audience of an earlier mythical landing at sunset there, when Hephaestus, hurled from Olympus, was taken in by the “Sintian men” (*Iliad* 1.594). The newcomers will be cared for, as was the god, but the sense of danger animated by the past textual and mythical example is not far off, especially when the story of the intervening homicide by the Lemnian women is now narrated (1.609–32).⁵⁵ Related to this sort of recall is a second mode, the use of *hapax legomena* to lend dramatic overtone to an episode. The Homeric participle *amphipesousa* (*Odyssey* 8.523) occurs

already in the late fourth century had discussed this line as the thematic culmination of the *Odyssey*, see Montanari 2012, 345–47.

⁵³ The total amount of these familiar phrases in Apollonius may have been increased somewhat through bias on the part of those copying the text toward Homeric over non-Homeric diction: see Haslam 1978, 55 for examples of such “invasion.” As he shows, scribal preference for more common Homeric forms (or even Homeric-sounding nonce formations) sometimes ousted from later MSS the original use of a *hapax legomenon* by Apollonius (e.g., at 1.1300, where a Milan papyrus preserves the Homeric hapax *anamormourousin*; cf. *Odyssey* 12.238).

⁵⁴ See work by V. Knight 1995; Clare 2002; Hunter 1993; Levin 1971; and the useful phrase inventory by Campbell 1981.

⁵⁵ For a full explication, see Clauss 1993, 103. A similar resonance provided by small detail comes in the epiphany of Apollo at Thunias (*Argonautica* 2.676–79; cf. *Iliad* 1.46), on which see Feeney 1991, 75.

once, describing how a wailing woman embraces her husband's corpse, in a simile about Odysseus' tears upon hearing the bard sing the sack of Troy. In the *Argonautica* (1.270), the word, in the same form and *sedes*, occurs in a simile about a distraught girl clutching at her nurse, which in turn describes the posture and emotion of Jason's mother Alcimede. The linkage thus produces a multi-dimensional reference: Odysseus resembles Alcimede (one returned almost home, after leaving his own mother in the underworld; the other watching her son leave); but the mother, in turn, is shifted into other imaginary roles—widow, orphan—that we will soon see made real during Jason's battle at Cyzicus (1.1053–77) and that inevitably recall Andromache and Penelope, among other Homeric grieving women. A further resonance of this departure scene is triggered by another *hapax*, the line-initial *entupas* (*Argonautica* 1.264), describing the grief-stricken father of Jason, “wrapped tightly” in his bed: *ἐντυπὰς ἐν λεχέεσσι καλυψάμενος γοάσκειν*. The description of Priam, *ἐντυπὰς ἐν χλαίνῃ κεκαλυμμένος*, in public self-abasement over the death of his son Hector (*Iliad* 24.163) provided the template. The result is a darker coloration for what otherwise might have been a less ominous event.⁵⁶

A third mode involves Homeric type-scenes. These function differently from the *hapax*-enhanced episodes, inasmuch as the creation of meaning pivots upon frequently repeated sequences (arming, embarking, feasting, etc.), rather than on a unique source passage in earlier epic. Using his audience's awareness of such scenes, Apollonius can craft significant changes. When the Argonauts sacrifice to Apollo at 1.402–38, the extended ritual actions, along with their placement within the poem, recall similar scenes at *Odyssey* 3.32–66 and *Iliad* 1.446–74, albeit with dictional variants. The divinity's approving reaction, however, prominent in the Homeric version (*Iliad* 1.457, 474; cf. *Odyssey* 3.62) is conspicuous by its absence.⁵⁷ A related technique characterizes the most expansive narrative of battle and its aftermath in the *Argonautica*, 1.1026–78. The poet synthesizes a number of typical Iliadic scenes, complete with similes to mark the start and the conclusion, description of wounds, a run of killings (with typical *variatio* of verbs), flight, and the death of the lead fighter.⁵⁸ All this a reader of Homer might expect, but the abrupt nature of the telling makes for an epic *reductio* that

⁵⁶ On the entire scene, see Clauss 1993, 40–47 and Cusset 1999, 270–72 with further bibliography.

⁵⁷ The scene is well analyzed by Feeney 1991, 69–70; cf. Cusset 1999, 264–66; on this episode and type-scene intertexts in general, see V. Knight 1995, 49–91.

⁵⁸ Detailed references in V. Knight 1995, 84–93.

reads more like a parody of Homeric style, while the heroization of the dead Doliones through cult lends the passage an aetiological distance completely foreign to the *Iliad*.⁵⁹

The mode of imitation-with-difference perhaps most difficult to articulate is what we may call “multiple overlay,” through which two or more Homeric scenes are subtly combined to produce multiple possibilities for interpreting a given Apollonius passage.⁶⁰ For instance, the boxing match between Amycus and Polydeuces (2.67–97) gestures both toward the funeral games of Patroclus (*Iliad* 23.683–99) and the fight of Odysseus with the beggar Iros (*Odyssey* 18.25–109), making the Argonautic version teeter between an heroic event and a boorish entertainment. The reception at the palace of Aeetes (3.210–74) carefully combines elements of Odysseus’s approach to the house of Alcinous (*Odyssey* 7.4–138) with his arrival on Ithaca (*Odyssey* 13.189–91; 18.86, 374), thus teasing out through phrasal and situational reminiscence the simultaneous opportunity and threat posed to Jason.⁶¹ The cosmogonic song of Orpheus (1.496–511) manages to combine key themes from all three of the songs of Demodocus in Book 8 of the *Odyssey*.⁶² The technique tempts the poet to be kaleidoscopic—the speech by the goddesses of Libya to the hopeless crew (*Argonautica* 4.1318–29) overlays no fewer than four Odyssean subtexts: Ino to Odysseus (5.339); the description of Calypso (5.60–70); the song of the Sirens (12.184–91); and the instructions of Teiresias (11.110).⁶³ In this case, almost cinematic montage aims at a cumulative effect, signaling one outcome (survival) rather than heightening the suspense.

At yet another level, epic source-texts are diffused more broadly throughout the *Argonautica* and the *déjà vu* thereby induced establishes more general narrative directions. A series of resemblances has been seen to link Book 3 of the *Argonautica* with Book 10 of the *Odyssey*, staging as it were Jason as an Odysseus, Aeetes as his sister Circe, Eros as a Hermes figure, and, ultimately, Medea as her own enchantress aunt (a meeting that will take place later in the poem).⁶⁴ The Lemnian episode is tethered to varied

⁵⁹ For this reading, see Goldhill 1991, 317–18.

⁶⁰ Cusset 1999, 276 suggests the term *surimpression*; others speak of multiple hypotexts or *contaminatio*.

⁶¹ See Bettenworth 2005, who stresses the enriching rather than destabilizing force of the overlay.

⁶² Nelis 1992.

⁶³ Clare 2002, 154.

⁶⁴ Correspondences worked out in V. Knight 1995, 176–78.

Odyssean predecessor texts at different points, letting us glimpse Hypsipyle as Nausicaa, as Alcinoos, and even as Telemachus, vulnerable inheritor of his father's island state.⁶⁵ At the highest level, of course, and particularly in Book 4 of the poem, the shape of the entire *Odyssey* provides the coastline along which the Argo travels and from which it veers away. Critical responses tend to fall on either side of that navigational divide, with some scholars cataloguing the dozens of similar elements that link Jason's voyage with that of Odysseus, while others highlight the bold departures from the Homeric script.⁶⁶ Typically, even on the choice of sailing directions, "Apollonius treads a fine line between adaptation of an Odyssean itinerary and rejection of the geographical implausibility of such a route."⁶⁷ The *Argonautica* "Odyssey" merges fantasy islands with the down-to-earth perspective of Hellenistic *periplous* literature.

Intertextual references of the types listed above operate just below the surface of each episode, with the occasional *hapax* or familiar Homeric phrase jutting up to orient the reader. By contrast, three other closely related categories of epic imitation overtly proclaim their relationship to earlier poetry: the catalogue, *ekphrasis*, and similes. Through these poetic devices, audiences are explicitly invited to compare the art of Apollonius with his models. All three are highly self-conscious supplements, pausing the forward movement of the narrative while calling attention to its literariness. As three distinct techniques aimed at *enargeia*—the urge for precise and vivid description so prized by ancient critics—they create meaning through their conspicuous placement, their links to the action of the poem, and their obvious divergence from Homeric and Hesiodic congeners.

The *Catalogue of Argonautica* 1.23–233 immediately distinguishes itself from the renowned Catalogue of Ships (*Iliad* 2.484–760) by giving a list of young warriors rather than a roll-call of regional contingents. It thus naturally flows from the narrator's stated goal of recalling the expedition to Colchis that brought fame to "men of long ago" (*palaigeneôn ... phôtôn*). Two aspects of this personalization stand out: the equal status of the crew members (unlike the Homeric warriors, these are not leaders but Jason's *summêstores* "co-devisers," 1.228); and the individuality of their motives and fates (e.g., Idmon wanting not to be deprived of fame [141], Augeas wishing to see exotic

⁶⁵ Bulloch 2006.

⁶⁶ V. Knight 1995, 122–266 tends toward the former, Clare 2002, 125–42 the latter.

⁶⁷ Clare 2002, 139. Dufner 1988 remains unsurpassed for detailed analysis of the Odyssean geographic intertexts.

lands [175], Mopsus and Canthus doomed to die [77–80]). The *Iliad* reserves mention of future fates for the catalogue of Trojan warriors (*Iliad* 2.860–61, 874–75). While both the Iliadic and Argonautic catalogues appear near the start of their respective poems (i.e., in narrative time), they are at opposite ends of the spectrum in narrated time: the gathering at Iolcus happens, as it were, in real time, at the Argo's departure, whereas the Homeric listing comes when ships have been beached for nine years (a vexing conundrum for later Analyst critics of the *Iliad*). The *Iliad* catalogue spirals outward geographically, from Boeotia; that of the *Argonautica* is also structured by place, closely mapped onto the Thessalian segment of the Catalogue of Ships.⁶⁸ But atop this topographical layer is placed a binary structure, not found in Homer, with Orpheus and Heracles dominating their respective halves of the list.⁶⁹ Finally, the rhythm of the two catalogues, through a similar crescendo effect, highlights a difference in content. Toward the end of the Catalogue of Ships, pain and loss are thematized by a triad of figures missing-in-action (Achilles 2.687–88, Protesilaus 698–702, Philoctetes 721–26). Apollonius responds with a quartet of magical warriors, who see through earth (Lynceus, 1.154–55), run on water (Euphemus 179–82), change shape (Periclymenus, 159–60), and fly (the Boreads, 219–23). This contrast alone speaks volumes about the tone of either epic.⁷⁰

The extended *ekphrasis* of Jason's cloak (1.721–67) reverses the protocols of digressive placement, in comparison with the Iliadic description of Achilles' shield, for the latter is a natural entailment of the plot (the hero has lost his own armor) and a brilliant prologue to the poem's concluding movement. Jason's artifactual equivalent makes him a lover, rather than a fighter; focuses us on the moment when his is still untried, even at this art; and is functionally superfluous. Thematically, on the other hand, the cloak makes richly suggestive connections to its immediate context and the rest of the poem, and has rightly drawn the attention of many interpreters. The reflexive nature of the finely woven work is clear in many ways, starting with the underlying metaphor of poetry as textile.⁷¹ That this is a textual moment to be gazed upon is hinted at through the third of its seven vignettes,

⁶⁸ See Scherer 2006, 57–134 for the most detailed analysis of narrative and structuring devices, including a study of geographic intertexts. Also useful is the typological study by Sistakou 2001. Antimachus may have composed his own catalogue of Argonauts: Matthews 1996, 71 n. 34.

⁶⁹ For further details of this structure see Clauss 1993, 26–34.

⁷⁰ On the “destabilizing” function of catalogues in Apollonius, see Clare 2002, 264. For the key subtext of the Homeric “catalogue of women” (*Odyssey* 11.225–330), see Bulloch 2006, 59–67.

⁷¹ Hunter 1993, 56.

Aphrodite's alluring image reflected on Ares' shield (neatly embedding the Homeric model for this very ekphrasis: 1.745–46).⁷² At the same time, as Simon Goldhill acutely observed, the cloak raises questions of the deceptiveness of appearances, the difficulty of viewing, the gap between the visual and verbal, and the possibilities of disconnection, through its apparently unstructured sequence of scenes.⁷³ Like the ram of Phrixus standing at the distant origin of the expedition (1.764–67), the episode seems to speak, but one would wait in vain to understand. Here, the most obvious Iliadic intertext might itself be a red herring, since the cloak's Empedoclean pairing of love and strife, programmatic for the *Argonautica*, is closer to Odyssean concerns, as in Demodocus' song of Ares and Aphrodite (*Odyssey* 8.266–366), already evoked by the song of Orpheus (*Argonautica* 1.496–511). The resemblances to the garb of Odysseus (*Odyssey* 19.225–35), like Jason's in its attractiveness to women, make this secondary Homeric model all the more resonant.⁷⁴

Similes, the third epic device for producing “vividness,” take new, sometimes strange, directions at the hands of Apollonius. As with his use of formulas, word-forms, and type-scenes, just enough familiarity is established to make the innovations stand out all the more. Similes occur at a rate near that of the *Iliad* (1 per 71 lines vs. *Iliad* 1 per 76; cf. 1 per 271 lines in the *Odyssey*), but are more evenly spread throughout the poem. Half of them begin with such typical Homeric introductions as *hōs hote*—but half use non-Homeric framing devices. Seven similes extend syntactically into the line resuming the “real” narrative as at 1.575–79:

ὥς δ' ὁπότε ἀγραύλοιο κατ' ἔχνια σημαντήρος
 μυρία μῆλ' ἐφέπονται ἄδην κεκορημένα ποίης
 εἰς αὖλιν, ὃ δέ τ' εἴσι πάρος σύριγγι λιγείη
 καλὰ μελιζόμενος νόμιον μέλος—ὥς ἄρα τοίγε
 ὠμάρευν τὴν δ' αἰὲν ἐπασύτερος φέρεν οὔρος

And as when countless sheep follow in the footsteps of a rustic shepherd to the fold after having had their fill of grass, and he goes in front, beautifully playing a shepherd's tune on his shrill

⁷² Cf. Feeney 1991, 70 on the oddity of this representational *mise en abyme*.

⁷³ Goldhill 1991, 308–11, with a penetrating survey of earlier interpretations.

⁷⁴ Yet another resonance comes from the phrasal recollection of Helen's web (*Iliad* 3.125–28) in *Argonautica* 1.722: see Cusset 1999, 281–82. On the complex thematic ties of the cloak as well as the “amatory” context for the cloak of Odysseus, see Hunter 1993, 52–55. On the parallels with the song of Demodocus—allegorized in antiquity as concerning love and war—see Nelis 1992.

pipes—*thus then* did the fish accompany the ship, and a steady wind bore it ever onward.

This is an effect that occurs only once in Homeric epic (*Odyssey* 10.414) and emblemizes the permeable boundary between this device and flow of the epic action in the *Argonautica*.⁷⁵ Of the two primary roles played by similes in Homer—rhythmic punctuation of extended narrative and emotional highlighting—Apollonius most often chooses the latter.⁷⁶ After Jason dons his cloak and starts out for the city of the Lemnian women, the poet compares him to a shining star (1.774–81):

Βῆ δ' ἵμεναι προτὶ ἄστρῳ, φαεινῷ ἀστέρι ἶσος,
ὃν ῥά τε νηγατέησιν ἐεργόμεναι καλύβησιν 775
νύμφαι θηήσαντο δόμων ὕπερ ἀντέλλοντα,
καί σφισι κυανέοιο δι' αἰθέρος ὄμματα θέλγει
καλὸν ἐρευνθόμενος, γάννται δέ τε ἡμέοιο
παρθένος ἰμείρουσα μετ' ἄλλοδαποῖσιν ἐόντος
ἀνδράσιν, ᾧ κέν μιν μνηστὴν κομέωσι τοκῆες— 780
τῷ ἵκελος προπόλοιο κατὰ στίβον ἤμεν ἥρωσ·

He went on his way toward the city like a shining star, which young brides, confined in newly made quarters, gaze upon as it rises above their houses, and enchants their eyes with its beautiful red luster through the dark sky, and the maiden rejoices as she yearns for the young man who is away among foreign people, for whom her parents are keeping her to be his bride. Like that star the hero followed in the footsteps of the servant.

Immediately, the simile places other viewers within our ken—young brides (*numphai*) whose eyes are enchanted by the rising red star (clearly, but tacitly, Hesperus, with all its erotic associations), and a young maiden, who longs for her distant husband-to-be. Not only does this dual reference suggest an evolving relationship, from unwed to married, relevant to the hero's encounters with Hypsipyle and Medea, but the simile as a whole also overflows its immediate signified (Jason's appearance) to recall the brightness of his cloak (red, like a rising sun: 1.725–27) and to gesture proleptically to his welcome by marriageable women (1.784), including their blushing queen (1.791: παρθενικὴ ἐρύθηνε παρηίδας). The Homeric background

⁷⁵ See Carspecken 1952, 60–67 for specifics on all these points. In general on Apollonius' similes, see Hunter 1993, 129–37; Reitz 1996; Cusset 1999, 117–257; and Matone 1999.

⁷⁶ On these roles in relation to the history of Homeric simile interpretation, see Chapter 2 above.

darkens the picture, as most star similes in the *Iliad* are baneful harbingers (cf. *Iliad* 22.26–32: Priam viewing the approaching killer of his son).⁷⁷ The audience must recall this image when, later on, Medea's anxious weeping is described (3.656–64) as like that of a *numphê* (newly married or betrothed) who laments her recently dead love.⁷⁸ The vision of ruddy celestial glow recurs in a simile at the moment Jason seizes the Fleece (4.125–26). Distant recall of an originating simile like that in 1.774–81 is further enabled by the exquisite care with which Apollonius carves such lyric gems, even phonically (note ἄστυ ... ἄστέρι and the meaningful echo of ἡθέοιο by ἦεν ἥως).

The evocation of mixed emotions and viewpoints by way of simile is, of course, not missing from Homeric art: one thinks of *Iliad* 16.7–11 (Patroclus compared to a small girl) or *Odyssey* 5.394–98 (Odysseus's sight of land like children's sight of their recovered father). Nor does Apollonius make longer similes. Instead, his are marked by a density and breadth of allusion and atunement perceptible in the finer details. Thus, the Homeric Nausicaa, leading her age-mates in song, is like Artemis (*Odyssey* 6.102–9):

οἷη δ' Ἄρτεμις εἶσι κατ' οὐρεα ἰοχέαιρα,
 ἢ κατὰ Τηύγετον περιμήκετον ἢ Ἐρύμανθον,
 τερπομένη κάπροισι καὶ ὠκείησ' ἐλάφοισι·
 τῇ δέ θ' ἅμα Νύμφαι, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο, 105
 ἀγρονόμοι παίζουσιν γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα Ἀητώ·
 πασάων δ' ὑπὲρ ἣ γε κάρη ἔχει ἠδὲ μέτωπα,
 ῥεῖα τ' ἀριγνώτη πέλεται, καλαὶ δέ τε πᾶσαι·
 ὧς ἣ γ' ἀμφιπόλοισι μετέπρεπε παρθένος ἀδμῆς.

And even as Artemis, the archer, roves over the mountains, along the ridges of lofty Taygetus or Erymanthus, joying in the pursuit of boars and swift deer, and with her sport the wood-nymphs, the daughters of Zeus who bears the aegis, and Leto is glad at heart—high above them all Artemis holds her head and brows, and easily may she be known, though all are fair—so amid her handmaidens shone the maid unwed. [trans. Murray 1919]

The description of Medea is a highly conscious imitation, prompting many resonances (*Argonautica* 3.876–86):

⁷⁷ On the simile, see Reitz 1996, 16–19 with further bibliography.

⁷⁸ Cf. Hunter 1989, 168–69 on this simile. For a similar linking to actions outside the simile, see Feeney 1991, 74 on *Argonautica* 2.600 (ship like an arrow) picking up 2.591–92 (oars bent like bows).

οἷη δέ, λιαροῖσιν ἐν ὕδασι Παρθενίοιο
ἧε καὶ Ἀμνισοῖο λοεσσαμένη ποταμοῖο,
 χρυσεῖοις Λητωῖς ἐφ' ἄρμασιν ἐστηνῖα
 ὠκείαις κεμάδεσσι διεξέλαησι κολώνας,
 τηλόθεν ἀντιόωσα πολυκνίσου ἐκατόμβης 380
τῇ δ' ἅμα νύμφαι ἔπονται ἀμορβάδες, αἱ μὲν ἀπ' αὐτῆς
 ἀγρόμεναι πηγῆς Ἀμνισίδες, αἱ δὲ λιποῦσαι
 ἄλσεα καὶ σκοπιᾶς πολυπίδακας, ἀμφὶ δὲ θῆρες
 κνυζηθμῶ σαίνουσιν ὑποτρομέοντες ἰοῦσαν—
 ὥς αἶγ' ἐσσεύοντο δι' ἄστεος, ἀμφὶ δὲ λαοί 385
 εἶκον ἀλευράμενοι βασιλίδος ὄμματα κούρης.

And as when by the warm waters of Parthenius, or after bathing
 in the Amnisus river, Leto's daughter stands in her golden
 chariot drawn by swift deer and drives through the hills, coming
 from afar to partake of a savory hecatomb, and with her follow
 nymphs in attendance—some gathering from the very source
 of the Amnisus, others having left groves and peaks with many
 springs—and all around wild animals fawn on her, cowering with
 whimpers as she makes her way; thus did they hasten through the
 city, and all around them the people gave way as they avoided
 the eyes of the royal maiden.

But the differences are telling. Leto is the viewer within the Odyssean simile and Artemis/Nausicaa is an object of the gaze, “easily recognizable” (ἀριγνώτη), while at the same time essentially like her beautiful companions. In the *Argonautica*, Artemis/Medea is Leto's daughter, but the would-be viewers of the girl (as the simile melts into narrative) conspicuously *refuse* to look, out of fear for her gaze. Unlike the choral ethos of the Homeric scene, the Apollonius version celebrates a divine power dynamic: nymphs from all over gather, animals fawn, and the goddess herself is driving to receive her hecatomb. This theme extends to the mention of rivers, for we are not far from the dangers associated with Artemis bathing, as developed in the myths of Teiresias and Actaeon (and Hellenistic versions thereof). Furthermore, the *Argonautica* simile packs in at least two other hypotexts featuring the jubilant arrival of gods and animal reactions: Poseidon (*Iliad* 13.27–28) and Aphrodite (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 69–74)—the latter a typically ironic gesture toward the erotic charm of this particular *parthenos*.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ On these connections and further analysis of this simile, see Hunter 1989, 194–96.

Character construction remains an under-theorized area of study regarding epic, archaic as well as Hellenistic. Unlike readers of nineteenth-century novels, we must look to features beyond realistic psychological depiction, since the hexameter poets in their creation of fictional persons worked within more formal conventions—traditional diction, type-scenes, set speeches. Even simile, as we have seen, can aid in implying character traits. Through situational and dictional echoes, Medea can be characterized as another Nausicaa, but also a Circe, Penelope, Andromache, or Helen.⁸⁰ A related form of overlay applied to the erring seer Phineus conflates Circe and Teiresias, leading the audience to assemble his “character” through reminiscence of these Odyssean roles.⁸¹ When Apollonius at other times employs an already complicated Homeric template, the layering produces a more convincing (albeit exasperating) protagonist. Not only is Jason, as we piece him together from other appearances, “jealous of honor but incapable of asserting it, passive in the face of crisis, timid and confused before trouble,”⁸² he also bears the scars of earlier imperfect heroes. Thus, Jason’s peculiar blend of hesitation, anxiety, and confidence as encapsulated in his “test” of the crew after their passage through the Clashing Rocks (2.621–47) is shadowed by the behavior of Agamemnon and his nearly disastrous *peira* of the troops in *Iliad* 2.56–154.⁸³ When Jason and Medea do finally settle on action (e.g., the latter at 3.751–824), it is never represented in the clear-cut Homeric schema of decision-making, but rather after a succession of random ideas, flustered thinking, and even discussion with other people about various alternatives, a departure from the tradition made all the more striking by a sprinkling of typical phrases from the older model.⁸⁴

Apart from these techniques, flowing from intertextual awareness, the primary means for constructing character in Homeric epic was direct speech. Even though Apollonius can employ with deft awareness the two main Homeric words distinguishing speech (*epos* and *mûthos*) to create meaningful allusions to the dynamics of the Ptolemaic court, his reporting of a character’s words throughout the composition is radically reduced: 71% of the lines in the *Argonautica* are in the poet’s voice, as contrasted with 55%

⁸⁰ V. Knight 1995, 181–84.

⁸¹ Hunter 1993, 90–95; cf. Clare 2002, 75.

⁸² Carspecken 1952, 101.

⁸³ Hunter 1988, 445–47; Kyriakou 1995, 122–31.

⁸⁴ Fine analysis in Rosenmeyer 1992.

in the *Iliad*.⁸⁵ This alone conduces to the sense that a very different sort of narrator lurks behind the poem's facade. Or, to put it in terms used in this essay, the overarching *expectation* created by all the levels of epic imitation in this poem—that the narrator, given his uncanny ventriloquism, will behave like his Homeric counterpart—turns out to be frustrated by the distinctively un-Homeric *voice*.

It is a more dominating, more interactive, and more emotionally involved voice than that heard in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. Indeed, it is most like that of a character within the epic, rather than an all-knowing distant narrator's.⁸⁶ Individual words that encode attitudes in Homer, primarily if not exclusively within character-speech (*oloos* “baneful,” *stugeros* “hateful”), are used by the narrator in the *Argonautica*.⁸⁷ Homeric speakers can call each other or the gods “merciless” or “headstrong” (*skhetlios*, e.g., *Odyssey* 13.293), but in Apollonius it is part of the narrator's vocabulary (as at *Argonautica* 2.1028, where it means “unfortunate”).⁸⁸ At the level of discourse habit, the voice that tells the tale exhibits the sort of avoidance strategies seen in the speeches by Homeric characters, whether it is vagueness about naming particular gods as responsible for action, or failure to pinpoint the source of changes in wind and weather.⁸⁹ Even at the level of discourse particles, the emotional tone and approach of a Homeric speaker is reflected in the use of *pou* “somehow, no doubt” and related forms, as the narrator speculates on the motives and feelings of his characters. Cyzicus is slain “doubtless [*pou*] thinking he was free from cruel destruction” (1.1037). The effect is as if the narrator “engages in a pervasive and variegated dialogue with his narratees.”⁹⁰ Such staging of the narrator's thoughts and feelings accords with the frequent use of moralizing maxims, as in the same passage: “for mortals can never escape fate” (1.1035).

And so we are encouraged to wonder: *who does* voice the *Argonautica*? The self-constrained nature of the narrator's performance has led to comparisons with the figure of the seer Phineus within the poem, who warns his listeners that they are not permitted to know everything “exactly” (*atrekes*,

⁸⁵ On *epos* and *mûthos*, see Mori 2001; for the relative rates of speech, see Hunter 2008, 141.

⁸⁶ On interactivity of Apollonius' narrator with his characters and audience, see Morrison 2007, 271.

⁸⁷ Hunter 1993, 110–11.

⁸⁸ Morrison 2007, 284.

⁸⁹ Feeney 1991, 87–89 on, e.g., 3.540 *theoi*.

⁹⁰ Cuypers 2005, 35 for the quote; *passim* for examples.

2.312), thus aligning himself with the selective and even misleading revelations by Zeus through oracles. Just so, the narrator eschews full disclosure, especially of sacred or magic ritual: he will not “make a *mûthos*” of the rites of Samothrace (1.919–21) nor sing of Medea’s propitiatory sacrifices to Hecate (4.247–50).⁹¹ At the same time, this narrator is remarkably knowledgeable, throughout the poem, in detailing the aitiologies of cult sites and practices.⁹² We are initiated into this lore, just as the Argonauts were instructed by Orpheus: the mantic voice of the narrator could well be that of the musician-hero. A near-identification does, after all, take place in the sudden break-off that marks Orpheus’ paeon to Apollo *Heōios* (2.706–10):⁹³

Δελφύνην τόξοισι πελώριον ἐξενάριξεν,
 κοῦρος ἔων ἔτι γυμνός, ἔτι πλοκάμοισι γεγηθώς
 (ἰλήχοις· αἰεῖ τοι, ἄναξ, ἄτμητοι ἔθειραι,
 αἰὲν ἀδήλητοι, τὼς γὰρ θέμις, οἴοθι δ’ αὐτή
 Λητὼ Κοιογένεια φίλαις ἐνὶ χερσὶν ἀφάσσει).

... the god killed monstrous Delphynes with his arrows, when he was still a naked boy, still delighting in his long locks—*be gracious*, lord, may your hair always remain unshorn, always unharmed, for such is right; and only Leto herself, Coeus’ daughter, strokes it with her dear hands.

Furthermore, an Orphic voice would harmonize with the overall hymnic framing of the poem, as marked out even in the invocation of 1.1–2:⁹⁴

Ἀρχόμενος σέο Φοῖβε παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν
μνήσομαι ...

Beginning with you, Phoebus, I shall recall the famous deeds of men born long ago ...

The often remarked failure to begin with the Muse can be taken several ways, among them as an assertion of authority equaling that of the daughters of Mnemosyne (and Orpheus himself is the offspring of a Muse, as we are told immediately after the proem: 1.23–34). That Orpheus has divine gifts is implied even syntactically, when his name is conjoined, in the genitive, with

⁹¹ Clare 2002, 274, and Feeney 1991, 61, 64–65, 94.

⁹² On aitiologies in the poem, see Köhnken 2010, 136–37.

⁹³ On the complex merging, see Goldhill 1991, 297–98, building on Fränkel 1968, 227–28.

⁹⁴ On hymnic influence in the proem, see Clare 2002, 21 and Hunter 2008, 115; also Clauss 1993, 16–19; Goldhill 1991, 287.

the verb “let us recall”: Πρῶτά νυν Ὀρφεὺς μνησώμεθα, for which the first line of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* offers the closest model (*Μνήσομαι* οὐδὲ λάθωμαι *Ἀπόλλωνος* ἐκάτοιο).⁹⁵ Orpheus as Muse-substituting narrator can even be detected in the parallel functions assigned in this passage, with the Muses (belatedly and indirectly) invoked as “interpreters” (Μοῦσαι δ’ ὑποφήτορες εἶεν αἰοιδῆς, 1.22) and the Muse’s son commemorated as “helper” (ἐπαρωγὸν ἀέθλων, 1.32).⁹⁶ The gradual occlusion of the narrator’s authority in favor of the Muses’ can then ironically be read as a type of *agôn* between divine and human singers, in which the latter loses (yet escapes the fate of Thamyris).⁹⁷ That a similar *agôn* has already been depicted in the poem, when Orpheus drowns out his cousins the Sirens (4.891–911), adds to the plausibility.

These mythopoeic multiforms bring us finally to a coda that deserves a treatise to itself: the relation of Apollonius to Hesiod. The formulation by Frederick Griffiths contrasts this succinctly with the Homeric influence: “Apollonius’ *alter ego* Orpheus is more a Hesiod than a Phemius.”⁹⁸ In the Alexandrian milieu, the archaic Boeotian was a crucial figure for imitation, as is clear from the *Aitia* and *Hymns* of Callimachus, as well as the *Phainomena* of Aratus.⁹⁹ As model for a divinely inspired poet not entangled with human kings and wars, the proem to the *Theogony* was especially good for Alexandrians to think with, even as they further mythologized it: a version of Hesiod’s encounter with the Muses underlies the Argonautic meeting with the Libyan *hērôssae* (4.1312–36).¹⁰⁰ The Hesiodic model, like the Homeric, was mediated through the contemporary scholarly activity of Alexandria, traces of which remain.¹⁰¹ Significantly, Apollonius was one of those who wrote on Hesiod: his opinion that a line is missing in the proem after *Theogony* 26 is mentioned in the *scholia vetera ad loc.* (diGregorio).¹⁰²

⁹⁵ The syntax of 1.1–2 offers ironic contrast, as the genitive is governed by *arkhomenos* “starting from you,” but the verb *mnêsomai* “I will recall” this time aims at humans, taking the accusative phrase *klea phôtôn* “the glories of men.”

⁹⁶ Morrison 2007, 288–95 summarizes the debate over the meaning of 1.22 *hupophêtores*.

⁹⁷ On the slippage of the narrator’s of authority, see Feeney 1991, 90–91; Goldhill 1991, 292–93; Morrison 2007, 272.

⁹⁸ Griffiths 1995, 188.

⁹⁹ Hunter and Fantuzzi 2004, 51–60, 351–55; Stephens 2003, 253–56.

¹⁰⁰ Feeney 1991, 92, noting the relevance of the dream-like atmosphere in both scenes.

¹⁰¹ On Zenodotus’ edition of the Hesiodic text, see Schroeder 2009.

¹⁰² On Apollonius’ scholarly work on Hesiod, see Pfeiffer 1968, 144 and Cusset 1999, 17.

Equally tantalizing is the information from an ancient *hypothesis* that he considered the [pseudo]-Hesiodic *Aspis* (*Shield of Heracles*) to be genuine, on the basis of its stylistic *kharaktêr*. That at times bizarre composition provides at least one decoration (a chariot race) for his own *ekphrasis* of Jason's cloak (*Argonautica* 1.752–58; cf. *Scutum* 305–13).¹⁰³

Given the epic ambitions of the *Argonautica* one might anticipate a weaker intertextual bond with this non-epic source, but Hesiod's magnetism might, in fact, account for some of the distinctive qualities that differentiate the Alexandrian epic. In terms of structure, the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*—as much as emerges from the extant fragments—was a prime hypotext for the Catalogue of Argonauts: Pero, mother of Talaus and Areius (1.118–21) and Periclymenus (cf. *Argonautica* 1.156–60), featured in both texts (cf. *Catalogue* fr. 33.11–36, 37). The Apollonian version blazons its generic connection at 1.230–32 by pointing to a matriarchal genealogical bond uniting the Minyans. The Catalogue-like list of the “race of goddesses” ending the *Theogony* includes the mother of Aristaeus (*Theogony* 977), yet another figure found prominently in Apollonius (in the embedded aetiology for the etesian winds: 2.506–52).

Human blood-ties in the poetry of Hesiod flow easily from theogonic materials. The inclusion of Orpheus among Jason's crew opens up the most opportunities for the latter genre to take root. The calming cosmogonic song of Orpheus (1.496–511) is the poem's most obvious debt to Hesiod, but strikingly deviates both in its philosophical beginning (“earth” and “sky” seeming to be unpersonified natural elements), as well as its subsequent “Orphic” lines of succession (Ophion and Eurynome as first inhabitants of Olympus). Only in its closing verses about the Cyclopes and young Zeus does the song align itself with our *Theogony* (*Theogony* 139–46; 477–506); even then the Hesiodic narrative is still in the future, in terms of this Orphic time-frame.¹⁰⁴

The *Theogony* narrative haunts the *Argonautica* the closer the heroes approach Colchis. Events from deep time—the rise of Zeus—are here horizontally displayed, so that “early” and “far” coincide. As we progress, Amycus is compared to the *Theogony*'s Typhoeus, offspring of Gaea (*Argonautica* 2.38–40; cf. *Theogony* 820–68); another challenger, the snake that guards the

¹⁰³ Hunter 1993, 55–56; see further Cusset 1999, 20, and on the stylistic character of the *Shield*, see Chapter 13 above.

¹⁰⁴ Clare 2002, 55; cf. Feeney 1991, 67–68, who also adduces the Cyclopean scene on Jason's cloak (1.730–34).

Fleece, was nourished by Gaea with the blood of Zeus's monstrous enemy Typhaon (2.1209–13). The *Argo* sails past the spot where, before the rise of Zeus, Cronus mated with Philyra, begetting the centaur Cheiron (2.1231–41). Prometheus, though his fate elapsed generations ago, is still a living presence in this landscape (2.1248–59). The liver-gnawing eagle is a daily sight and the root nourished by his bloody *ichor* will go toward protecting Jason in his great trial (3.851–57). The Cyclopes of Orpheus' song were "earth-born" (*gêgenees*, 1.510), just as the story ran in Hesiod (*Theogony* 139, though without this adjective). But it is the other Hesiodic offspring of Gaea—Typhoeus, the Erinyes—that we are reminded of while moving east: the six-armed men of Bear Mountain (*Argonautica* 1.943) and ultimately the teeth-sprung warriors of Aeetes (3.499). Jason, in effect, struggles still with theogonic time; it is not accidental that his own contest to subdue the fire-breathing oxen (3.1299–1305, 1326–29) resonates with diction from the *Theogony's* conquest of the Titans (689–700) and Typhoeus by Zeus (853–68).¹⁰⁵ Although the terms of that struggle are reversed—it is Zeus who smites with burning fire, like the oxen Jason must overcome—this only underlines the hero's own heritage: he comes from the territory of Zeus's rival Prometheus (as he tells Medea: 3.1086–95), from whom he himself can claim descent.

Jason's vanquishing of the oxen enables him to plow and sow, as if moving immediately from a *Theogony* to the *Works and Days*. Words from a central section of that poem (*Works and Days* 415–73) spring up in his cutting of furrows (3.1330–45) and in the imagery used to describe Jason's harvesting of the earth-born warriors (3.1386–90 cutting unripe crop; 1396–1403 crop damaged by rain).¹⁰⁶ Perhaps such diction is only to be expected in a scene related (if weirdly) to agricultural life, yet it reminds us that the "realism" of Apollonius had already been exploited in the poetic tradition by the Boeotian bard whose many wisdom works (whether *Astronomy*, *Bird-Signs*, or *Precepts of Cheiron*) presented "an archaic model for a poetics of information."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ The defeat of Typhoeus is followed by a description of the threatening winds that arise from the monster (*Theogony* 869–79); the last fiery gasp of the oxen prompts a wind simile (cf. 3.1327 *epipneionte* and *Theogony* 872 *epipneiousi*).

¹⁰⁶ Compare *Argonautica* 3.1381 and *Works and Days* 431 *histoboei*; 1325 and *Works and Days* 467 *ekhetlē*; 1331 and *Works and Days* 463–64 *neios*; cf. also *Scutum* 286–90; 1347 and *Works and Days* 439, 443 *aulaka*; 1399 and *Works and Days* 415 *ombrēsantos*.

¹⁰⁷ Lamberton 1988b, 151.

The image of the farmer with a newly sharpened sickle (3.1388) that describes Jason at work in this Hesiodic context might summon up the *Theogony*, and the *harpê* of Cronus, given to him by his oppressed mother Gaea (*Theogony* 175, 179). The bloody episode might have remained deep beneath this text, were it not for the explicit evocation of it by the *Argonautica* narrator in the next book of the poem (*Argonautica* 4.982–87):

Ἔστι δέ τις πορθμοῖο παροιτέρη Ἰονίοιο
ἀμφιλαφῆς πείρα Κεραυνίη εἰν ἀλὶ νῆσος,
ἧ ὕπο δὴ κείσθαι δρέπανον φάτις (ἴλατε Μοῦσαι,
οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐνέπω προτέρων ἔπος) ᾧ ἀπὸ πατρὸς
μήδεα νηλειῶς ἔταμε Κρόνος οἱ δέ ἐ Διούς
κλείουσι χθονίης καλαμητόμον ἔμμεναι ἄρπην

There is a fertile, expansive island at the entrance of the Ionian strait in the Ceraunian sea, under which is said to lie the sickle—*forgive me, Muses, not willingly do I repeat my predecessors' words*—with which Cronus ruthlessly cut off his father's genitals. Others, however, say it is the *reaping scythe* of indigenous Demeter.

This remarkable apology for repeating “the *epos* of those who came before” clearly refers to the castration episode at *Theogony* 176–82. In classic Hellenistic fashion, the narrator recalls the story only to counteract the myth by another, in which people “repeat as *kleos*” (*kleiousi*) that the island is actually associated with the scythe of Demeter, who taught the Titans to cut grain. Furthermore, the island is home to the Phaeacians, who boast a very un-Hesiodic (and un-Homeric) origin, as descendants of the blood of Uranus (4.992). Whereas the *Theogony* knows of Erinyes, Giants, and nymphs called *Meliai* emerging from the bloody droplets off the severed genitals (and Aphrodite from the organ itself), this version would ally Jason with protectors who, like him, are connected to powerful figures before or outside the Olympian regime—Uranus and Prometheus. In other words, the apparently innocent alternative version is, politically and poetically, subversive. We could say that Apollonius here treats the martial side of Hesiod—his cosmogonic woundings and slaughters—to a challenge from the agricultural—the celebration of Demeter and her works. The terms of such a contestation were long familiar to Greeks at a metapoetic level. A traditional generic split is contained in the view of Aeschylus, as staged by Aristophanes (*Frogs* 1030–36): Hesiod teaches men the working of the earth, harvest, and plowing; Homer teaches troop formation, armings, and glorious exploits. The later *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*—a second-century CE composition

with roots going back to the sixth century BCE—has Hesiod proclaimed the winner in his singing match against Homer, since his lines speak of land-working (*georgia*), not wars and slayings.¹⁰⁸ Given the danger in assuming that Apollonius was governed by a binary opposition—if not Homer, then Hesiod—it is perhaps best, as with so many features of this astounding poet, to triangulate.¹⁰⁹ Orpheus has a contest with the Sirens and, perhaps by implication, with the Muses in the *Argonautica* (if it is indeed his “voice” that we hear behind the narrator). That Homer and Hesiod can abide in such close complementarity in this new epic, rather than be drawn up according to their traditional opposition, shows a compositional skill akin to that of the singer of cosmogonies (1.496–515), the man who by his all-encompassing craft enchants his listeners and puts to rest their quarrels.

¹⁰⁸ Allen 1912, lines 205–10. On the fourth century BCE and earlier forms of the story see Richardson 1981.

¹⁰⁹ Morrison 2007, 11.

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